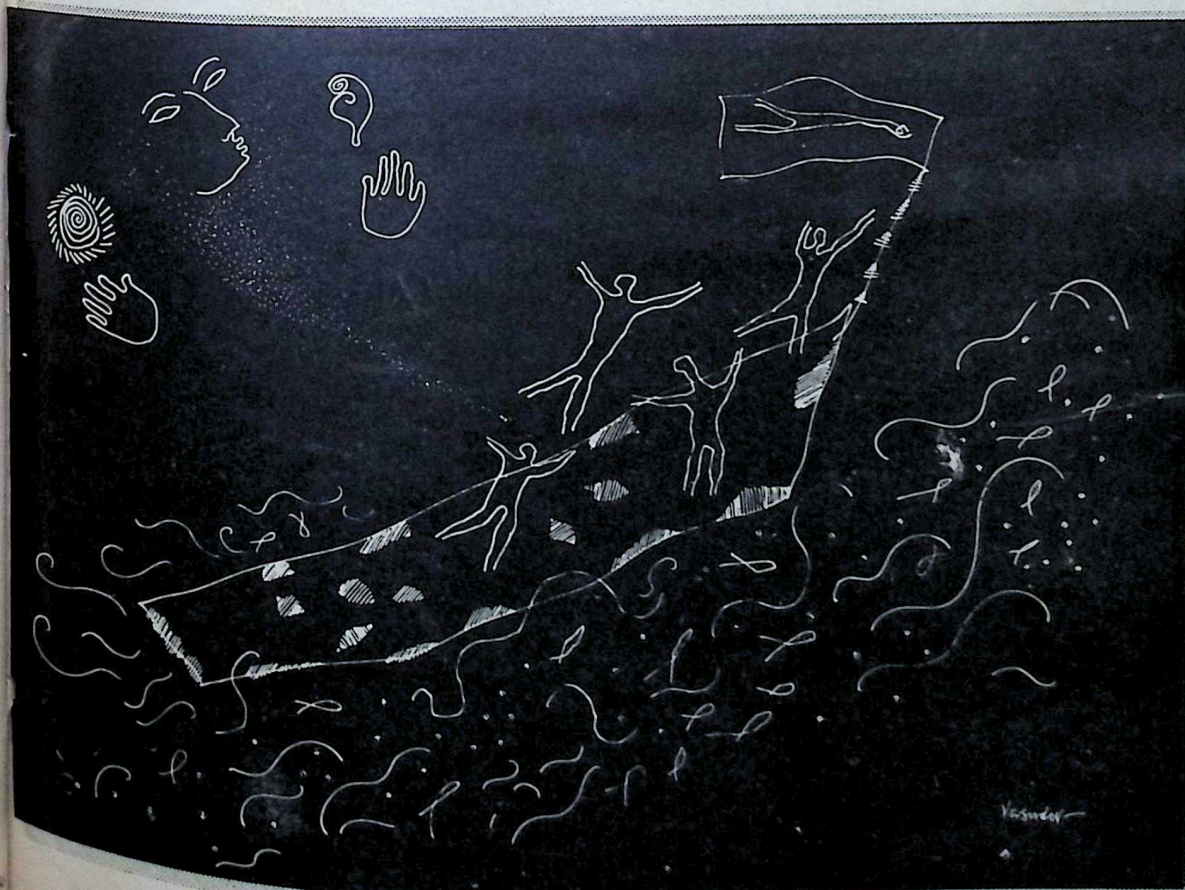


# THE BOOK REVIEW

*Vishnu*  
24/4/98  
LIBRARY  
Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya  
HARIDWAR

APRIL 1998

VOLUME XXII - NUMBER 4



- MAHESH BUCH  
*A Benchmark Study* . . . 3
- RALPH BUULTJENS  
*Roadmap to Economic Destiny*  
... 5
- SHIV VISHVANATHAN  
*The Secular as a Public Theatre*  
... 10
- PATRICIA UBEROI  
*Sexual Discipline and National  
Regeneration* ... 18
- MARGRIT PERNAU-REIFELD  
*Mirroring An Epoch* ... 23
- TABISH KHAIR  
*From Hai Bread! To Hybrid: An  
Essay in Evasion?* ... 29
- STEPHEN MOSS  
*Of Books and Awards* ... 34



# Contents

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Mahesh Buch            | <i>Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar 1854-1996</i> by Nandini Sundar                                                                                                         | 3  |
| Ralph Buultjens        | <i>The Wealth and Poverty of Nations</i> by David Landes; <i>The Commanding Heights—The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace that is Remaking the World</i> by Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw | 5  |
| Sumi Krishna           | <i>Population, Environment and Development</i> edited by R.K. Pachauri and Lubina F. Quereshey; <i>Environmentalism: Politics, Ecology and Development</i> by Pravin Sheth                                 | 8  |
| Shiv Vishvanathan      | <i>In the Name of the Secular: Contemporary Cultural Activism in India</i> by Rustom Bharucha                                                                                                              | 10 |
| T.C.A. Ramanuja Chari  | <i>Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning</i> by Onara O'Neill                                                                                                          | 11 |
| Lt. Gen J.F.R. Jacob   | <i>Missed Opportunities—Indo-Pak War 1965</i> by Maj. Gen. Lachhman Singh                                                                                                                                  | 14 |
| Neelima Luthra         | <i>Meditation Know-How</i> by Swami Sivananda                                                                                                                                                              | 15 |
| G.P. Sharma            | <i>The Agrarian Drama: The Leftists and the Rural Poor in India 1934-1951</i> by Amit Kumar Gupta                                                                                                          | 16 |
| Patricia Uberoi        | <i>Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period</i> by Frank Dikötter                                                     | 18 |
| Jasjit Purewal         | <i>Researching Sexual Violence Against Women—Methodological and Personal Perspectives</i> edited by Martin D. Schwartz                                                                                     | 20 |
| Margrit Pernau-Reifeld | <i>Enslaved Daughters: Colonialism, Law and Women's Rights</i> by Sudhir Chandra                                                                                                                           | 23 |
| Sarvar V. Sherry Chand | <i>Feminism: Theory, Criticism, Analysis</i> by Sushila Singh                                                                                                                                              | 24 |
| R. Rajamani            | <i>Thiruppavai: Goda's Garland of Immortal Hymn</i> translated by R. Bangaraswami                                                                                                                          | 25 |
| Stephen Greenblatt     | <i>In Conversation with Manu Chakravarthy</i>                                                                                                                                                              | 26 |
| Tabish Khair           | <i>From Hai Bread! To Hybrid: An Essay in Evasion?</i>                                                                                                                                                     | 29 |
| Rita Kothari           | <i>The Role of Tradition in Literature</i> by Sitakant Mahapatra                                                                                                                                           | 32 |
| Sukrita Paul Kumar     | <i>The Knight's Move</i> by Giriraj Kishore. Translated from the original Hindi by Prajapati Sah                                                                                                           | 33 |
| Stephen Moss           | <i>Of Books and Awards</i>                                                                                                                                                                                 | 34 |
| T.S. Parthasarathy     | <i>Indian Classic Music—An Invitation</i> by Raghava R. Menon                                                                                                                                              | 35 |
| Jayeeta Sharma         | <i>African Tales from Tendai's Grandmother</i> by Lakshmi Mukundan                                                                                                                                         | 35 |
|                        | <b>Communications</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | 37 |
|                        | <b>Book News</b>                                                                                                                                                                                           | 39 |
|                        | Cover: Visual rendering of the Kannada poem "Brahma Gnana" by A.K. Ramanujan by S.G. Vasudevan                                                                                                             |    |

Editors: Chandra Chari Uma Iyengar

Assistant Editor: Preeti Gill

Design and Layout

Tulika Print Communication Services  
35A/1 (second floor),  
Shahpur Jat  
(near Asiad Village),  
New Delhi 110 049  
Telephones 649 7999, 649 1448

Editorial Advisory Board:

K.R. Narayanan S. Gopal Raja Ramanna Nikhil Chakravarty N.S. Jagannathan Narayani Gupta Romila Thapar  
Meenakshi Mukherjee K.N. Raj V.P. Dutt Mrinal Pande Tejeshwar Singh Chitra Narayanan Ashok Vajpeyi Pulin Nayak

Subscription Rates 1998

Single Issue: Rs 25.00  
Annual Subscription (12 Issues)  
Individual: Rs 250.00 / \$40.00 / £25.00  
Institutional: Rs 300.00 / \$60.00 / £35.00  
(Inclusive of bank charges and postage)  
Life Donors: Rs 5000.00 and above

Please address all mail to:

Post Box No. 5247, Chanakyapuri  
New Delhi 110 021  
Registered mail should be sent only to  
23 Vasant Enclave, New Delhi 110057  
Telephone: 614 4805, 614 2031  
Tele+ Fax: 91-35 5500

*The Book Review* is a non-political, ideologically non-partisan journal which tries to reflect all shades of intellectual opinions and ideas. The views of the reviewers and authors writing for the journal are their own. All reviews and articles published in *The Book Review* are exclusive to the journal and may not be reprinted without the prior permission of the editors.

Published by Chandra Chari for The Book Review Literary Trust, 239 Vasant Enclave, New Delhi 110 057. Typeset at Tulika Print Communication Services Pvt.Ltd., 35 A/1, Shahpur Jat, New Delhi 110 049. Printed at Pans Press, 2147 Panchsheel, New Delhi 110 020.



# A Benchmark Study

Mahesh Buch

SUBALTERNES AND SOVEREIGNS: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL HISTORY OF  
BASTAR 1854-1996

By Nandini Sundar

Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 296, Rs. 495.00

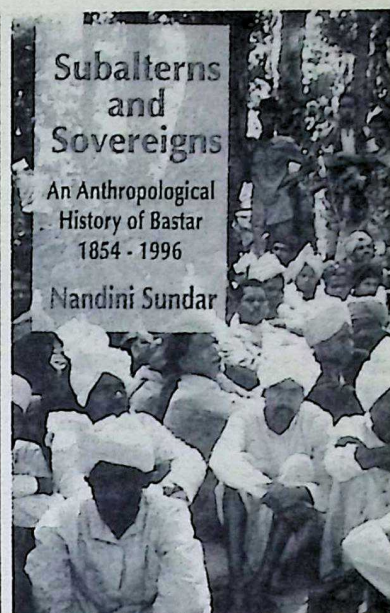
Bastar has always held a fascination for anthropologists, because of its remoteness, the presence of the tribes whose origin is largely Gondi, the social customs and the impact of outside influences on the people and the area. Verrier Elwin spent almost a lifetime studying the Hill Madias, largely in the Abujmad area. Dr. Sankalia made a study of Lanka, again in Abujmad, to see whether this was the Lanka referred to in the *Ramayana*. Though a geographer by calling, Shankar Tiwari made a deep study of the Kanger Valley, one of the most beautiful regions in the whole of India. The latest in this series of studies of Bastar is the book *Subalterns and Sovereigns*, written by Nandini Sundar. No review of this book can start with anything but a compliment to the author for the extremely readable style in which it has been written, thus saving it from the onus of dullness which is the hallmark of many serious studies. Bastar and its past come to life through the able penmanship of Nandini Sundar.

The author has looked at two aspects of change in Bastar, the first relating to insertion of Bastar into a capitalist framework; and the second relating to the super-imposition of concepts of governance relevant to a non-tribal society into what is basically a tribal society. These are points of friction which have generated conflict and led to a series of resistances and rebellions in Bastar.

The fact that she has been somewhat influenced by the thinking of Dr. B.D. Sharma, a figure of great controversy in Bastar, does not detract from the merits of the book, but it tends to give it a certain underlying bias. Perhaps this bias would have come in any case because the non-tribal intruders in Bastar have not always been kind to the tribals. One of the interesting points made by the author in the Introduction is that whereas Bastar is hilly and afforested and because of this it is distinct from the plains, it has never been so remote as not to be interconnected with them. What Bastar had was a distinct polity from the plains, though not necessarily in conflict with it. What Bastar did not have was the type of commercialization which existed in the plains.

The author has looked at two aspects of change in Bastar, the first relating to insertion of Bastar into a capitalist framework; and the second relating to the super-imposition of concepts of governance relevant to a non-tribal society into what is basically a tribal society. These are points of friction which have generated conflict and led to a series of resistances and rebellions in Bastar.

I find the references to the tribes and the semi-tribal groups which speak Halbi and have elements of castes in them both fascinating and informative. This makes the introductory chapter of the book of great importance in understanding the ethnography of the district. The chapter is superbly crafted. This is fully supported by the further studies she has made of the past history as gleaned by personal experience of life in Kukanar and collecting the oral history of the region. That such history is looked at from the point of view of an anthropologist makes part of the book more akin to a gazetteer than just history. The way in which the life style of the people is described reminds me of the *Gazetteer* of Balaghat written in 1901. When I toured my sub-division, Waraseoni, with that gazetteer in hand 58 years after it was written, I could still



identify the habits, work-styles and lifestyles of the various clans and castes which inhabit the rural areas of the district. In the course of just a few pages the author has been able to compress this information and present it most readably.

Though Bastar is remote it is also well endowed by nature and, therefore, has been a target for invasion. Naga Kings, Kakatiyas and then the last ruling dynasty of Bastar all came from outside and occupied the region. The Mughals, Marathas and Bahmani kingdoms all had influence in or suzerainty over Bastar. Despite this Bastar retained its basic tribal structure, largely because of the inaccessible nature of the terrain. At one level it forms part of the composite mosaic of India. At another level Bastar retains an indigenous identity of its own. The Bastar Dussehra has always been of great importance, but it is interesting to view it from Nandini Sundar's angle. She states, "Dussehra encapsulates the process of state formation under the Kakatiyas—both spatially and historically... Each ritual of the festival provides a glimpse of the textured construction of hegemony through time, e.g., the manner in which it is organized and orderly routine and imagery of imperial durbars was based on and refashioned old regime assemblies...". The author then goes on to state, "Secondly, Dussehra has always been and remains a performative act of legitimation, a process whereby to paraphrase Corrigan and Sayer, the state states—it defines individual and collective identity". In other words Dussehra in Bastar goes beyond mere Durga Puja—it is the means by which the ruler reminded his people about his own position, about their rights and their duties to the ruler. If Dussehra is

today a religious festival, in the past it was a royal ritual. The description of Dussehra, its rituals and its importance form one of the key elements of the book.

This being a book review and not a precis of the book, one has to move from the purely social, cultural and anthropological to the main theme of the book, i.e., conflict in Bastar between the ruled and the rulers. The author begins with the movement which began in February, 1876, in which an exploited peasantry first petitioned and then tried to force the ruler to free them from the clutches of the Diwan, Gopinath Kapurdar and his Munshis. This resulted in perhaps the first British intervention in Bastar through the good offices of the Deputy Commissioner of Sironcha in C.P. & Berar. What this intervention stated was that Britain was the paramount power, whose officers could always be approached for settlement of legitimate grievances but who would also ensure that any armed demonstration or rebellion would be forcefully put down.

This much is history. What is interesting is the different interpretations of this rebellion referred to by the author. The Chief Commissioner of C.P. & Berar praised the people for a rebellion in which there was no bloodshed and in which the State Treasury had not been touched. The British supported the peasants against a weak and oppressive ruler. By implication, if the revolt had been against the British, then the peasants would no longer have been considered innocent and would have been punished by the British. Another interpretation of course is that the Diwan, who was alleged to have an illicit relationship with the Rani of Bastar, was unpopular and it is to eliminate him that the Raja and his advisors engineered the agitation. In any case the British emerged from this as protectors of the peasants, the Raja as being weak but misled by his corrupt officials, the tribals as being basically nonviolent and the Diwan and his Munshis being villains. This is Ramachandra Guha's interpretation, which is not accepted by Nandini Sundar. Whereas Ramachandra Guha feels that there was a relatively harmonious relationship between the Raja and the people, the author feels that this was the point at which the paternalism of the ruler gave way to a form of colonial paternalism of the British. It is from this point on that from time to time the British began to intervene in Bastar by appointing administrators.

Nandini Sundar's thesis is that about this time the revenue administration changed in Bastar. Malguzari was introduced, leading to a sharp rise in land



revenue and exploitation of the cultivators. The author considers the period from 1876 to 1910 as a turning point in Bastar's history. There was greater British intervention, the forests were brought under direct management, 'jhum' cultivation was discouraged, though the beneficial 'toungiya' system was introduced, minor forest produce was largely taken away from the people, grazing rights were restricted and, gradually, the administration of forests brought in line with that of reserve forests in British India. As the administrative apparatus grew with the introduction of formal land survey and settlement, the practice of 'begar' also increased, which was much resented by the villagers.

By 1910 a combination of all the factors enumerated above led to a major rebellion, known as 'Bhumkal'. Starting from Netnar the rebellion soon spread to the Kanger Valley. Village 'haats' were looted and traders were attacked. Violence soon spread to acts of arson and looting of offices, schools and police stations and attacks on government officials. At Kuakonda and Bhairamgarh four policemen, a forester and a trader were killed. Government mail was intercepted and its distribution disturbed. The situation began to go out of hand and this led to direct intervention by the British, who sent in armed police to quell it. A detachment of the army was also sent to Bastar. The author gives the details of how the rebellion was put down, but within three months peace was restored and a number of rebels arrested. By May, 1910 the situation had normalized to the extent where almost the entire force was able to leave Bastar. By and large punishment was swift and took the form of

public whipping. Lal Kalandar Singh of the ruling family, who had a major role to play in the rebellion, was deprived of his assets and exiled to British India. The author does not state this but what is interesting to me as a former administrator is that with less mobility and a small force the British were able to put down a widespread rebellion without too much loss of life on either sides. By contrast the police firing in Multai very recently, in which the mob fired upon had no weapons other than stones, resulted in 23 deaths and more than 50 gunshot injuries. To that extent one must admire the fact that the British probably handled mobs much better than we do.

Nandini Sundar contrasts the 1910 rebellion with that of 1876 and comes to the conclusion that both the elite and the peasants joined in 1910 because, unlike the previous rebellion, this one was directed against the British, whose policies had deprived even the elite of some of their privileges such as access to forests, 'muafis', etc. Like the peasants they, too, had grievances.

From 1920 onwards Bastar became a subject of study by anthropologists such as Verrier Elwin and administrator anthropologists such as Grigson, Hutton, Mills, Hyde and Mitchell. The anthropologically minded administrators wanted to isolate tribal groups from the corrosive influences of mainstream India, whereas other administrators wanted to extend normal administration to tribal areas. The nationalists who were fighting the British looked upon the policy of isolating the tribals as one directed to divide and rule. This led to clashes between the anthropologically minded administrators and the rest of the government. This became a conflict between indirect rule as suggested by the anthropologists and direct rule as desired by the government. This also took the form of decentralization of some aspects of administration, including the judicial administration, through village and paragana panchayats. The idea was to save the people from excessive dependence on the police and the courts. Because the system was not carried to its logical conclusion of genuine decentralization, what resulted was a weak panchayat system and a normal administration which could use decentralization as an excuse for lack of accountability. Nevertheless, Bastar has remained relatively less disturbed in social and administrative customs than the neighbouring areas of Orissa and Bihar.

The author is of the view that the policies followed towards tribals in general and Bastar in particular have remained almost the same after independence as they were before indepen-

dence, except that there is greater politicisation of the system. The conflict between Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo, the last ruler of Bastar, and Government is chronicled in detail, the conflict being largely viewed in terms of electoral politics. What has been missed, however, Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo, with whom I had some personal acquaintance, was mentally extremely imbalanced and almost a certifiable lunatic. I am not in any way justifying the handling of the situation which resulted in a number of adivasi deaths and that of Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo, because that was an administrative failure. Nevertheless to hold that it is wrong to view the situation in Bastar at that stage as one of law and order and not due to internal political dynamics is to ignore the mischief done by a half crazy ruler playing on the emotions of tribals with a view to establishing his own hegemony. The author does comment that Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo could not have fulfilled his promises of independence and prosperity and that a combination of government insensitivity, political corruption and the megalomania of an individual ended in a tragic farce.

The history of rebellion ends with the story of Baba Bihari Das and the Bhagats. Dr. B.D. Sharma, then Collector of Bastar, emerges from this as the only hero. The fact is that initially Dr. B.D. Sharma supported the reform movement of Baba Bihari Das and then, when the movement became widespread and went out of hand, he tried to suppress it. The Baba then became important to the politics of Bastar and B.D. Sharma had to move. In the case of Baba Bihari Das I would submit that it is an example of how a so-called activist administrator, such as B.D. Sharma, can cause more harm than good by forgetting that an administrator never takes sides and that his first interest is orderly governance. Had B.D. Sharma behaved like an administrator, Baba Bihari Das would have been out of Bastar long before he could play mischief. In the ultimate analysis, whether the people be tribal or non-tribal, there is no substitute for good governance.

Any review is bound to be subjective because the reviewer's point of view may not coincide with that of the author. While differing with Nandini Sundar on some of her emphases and conclusions, I would nevertheless recommend her book as a bench-mark study and one which every scholar and administrator should read in order to understand tribal society.

*Mahesh Buch, a former civil servant, is the Chair person, National Centre for Human Settlements & Environment, Bhopal.*

## MANOHAR

NEW BOOKS

### CASTE IN INDIA

Origin, Function and Dimensions of Change  
Suvira Jaiswal

81-7304-238-1, 1998, 290p. Demy 8vo, Rs. 500

This comprehensive study is divided into five chapters. The introduction looks at the definition of caste, the evidence in Vedic texts, and the class role of caste and the elite. This is followed by a detailed chapter on the historiography of caste and gender issues. Other chapters examine stratification in Rigvedic society and early Buddhism. It concludes with an overview of the changing paradigms of brahmanical integration.

### REPRESENTING THE OTHER?

Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims  
(Eighth to Fourteenth Century)

Brhadajudh Chatteropadhyaya

81-7304-252-7, 1998, 130p. Demy 8vo, Rs. 250

The history of how 'others' were perceived and represented in the past in India has hardly been consciously worked upon by historians so far.

This monograph examines literary and epigraphic texts which share some similarities in order to find out how satisfactorily they convey to us the general attitudes to groups of newcomers to Indian society in various capacities during the period under study.

The study is organized into four chapters: The Twin Burden. Historiography and Sources. Images of Raiders and Rulers. Meritorious Deeds. Sacred Sites and the Image of God as the Lord of the universe; and conclusions.

Two appendices and select bibliography further enrich the study.

### INDIA

Changing Economic Structure in the  
Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries

Outline History of Crafts and Trade

Alexander I. Tchitcherov

81-7304-206-3, 1998, 326p. Demy 8vo, Rs. 550

Based on a vast array of sources, the author describes how in a feudal system, on the eve of the colonial period, the output of various products was transformed from household village crafts to production for various markets.

The author also examines patterns of trade, rural and urban markets, merchant-state nexus, increasing engagement of the feudal class in trade and finally the new forms and volume of trade and commodity production with the arrival of European merchants.

### ORIGIN, EVOLUTION AND CIRCULATION OF FOREIGN COINS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Osmund Bopearachchi and

D.P.M. Weerakkody (eds)

81-7304-216-0, 1998, 292p. illus. Demy 4to, Rs. 900

Papers in this collection are rich in content and diversity, and cover a wide range of field from the origin of Chinese and Greek coins to modern Bank notes, Islamic coins and coins for presentation and display in early modern Europe and Roman, Chinese, Indian and Islamic coins circulating in Sri Lanka and several other countries of the Indian Ocean. Of special interest are the papers on the early European coins and paper money minted/printed in Europe for circulation in Sri Lanka.

— For our complete catalogue please write to us at

**Manohar Publishers & Distributors**

2/6, Ansari Road, New Delhi - 110002

Ph. : 327 5162, 328 4848 • Fax : 326 5162

email: MANBOOKS@GASDLO1.VSNL.NET.IN

*Nandini Sundar contrasts the 1910 rebellion with that of 1876 and comes to the conclusion that both the elite and the peasants joined in 1910 because, unlike the previous rebellion, this one was directed against the British, whose policies had deprived even the elite of some of their privileges such as access to forests, 'muafis', etc. Like the peasants they, too, had grievances.*



# Roadmap to Economic Destiny

Ralph Buultjens

THE WEALTH AND POVERTY OF NATIONS

By David Landes

W.W. Norton and Company, New York, pp. 597, \$ 30.00

THE COMMANDING HEIGHTS—THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE MARKETPLACE THAT IS REMAKING THE WORLD

By Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw

Simon and Schuster, New York, pp. 457, \$ 26.00

Right now, the world of twentieth century economics is dying. Its central lineaments, powerful features which defined an age, are decreasingly influential or increasingly irrelevant to the course of the world. As the old stumbles, the shape of things to come casts its shadow. The outline is clear: A fresh economic civilization is in the making, a civilization gathering around the organizing principle of globalized capital and markets. However, these confluences of idea and system do not embrace a convergence of soul. The emerging environment is deeply riven by the frustrations of the leftouts and the dropouts—angers enhanced because there are no more socialistic handouts in the brave new capitalist world.

The passage between these two realms of economics, one departing and the other coming, is proving more treacherous than ever anticipated. De-

velopments that contradict experience, and subvert conventional wisdom abound—intractable unemployment in traditionally prosperous western Europe, prolonged stagnation in once dynamic Japan, collapse of the "miracle" in southeast and east Asia, the dark underside of the market in Russia, failures of development economics in both poor regions like Africa and societies awash with oil money, and other unpredictables. Happenings that amaze the affluent and enrage the afflicted. In fact, so lopsided is the condition of this traditional global economy that only a few countries with about 30 per cent of the world's output are operating near full blast. In effect, they carry the balance 70 per cent who are currently non-performers! A negative tilt in this precarious balance can plunge all of us into the abyss.

It's not supposed to work like this—and there are no modern precedents or guidelines to help us find our place or

ease our path. The best we can do is to look at the past and examine the present to see what all this means. In short, we need to ask two sets of questions. First, the historical and contextual: How did we come to this situation? What does the past tell and foretell? Second, a contemporary analysis: What is going on? In what direction is the global economy moving? If the answers are good enough, we can perhaps garner insights which will facilitate our understanding and help policy-making.

These concerns are addressed separately in two complementary books of about the same length. David Landes, former Coolidge Professor of History at Harvard University, takes the long view—looking back to look around. Daniel Yergin, author of *The Prize* (the Pulitzer Prize-winning saga of the petroleum industry) and head of Cambridge Energy Research, collaborates with his colleague Joseph Stanislaw in an exploration of the recent upheavals in the global market place—looking around to look forward. Using different approaches and drawing on different strengths, these seasoned professionals have produced, quite unwittingly, works that sit well together.

## I

In *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, a deliberate take-off on Adam Smith's title, Landes argues that the greatest problem in the world today is the gap between rich and poor. This condition presents a horrible threat: If deprived peoples do not become wealthier "they will seek to take what they cannot make and if they cannot earn by exporting commodities, they will export people....wealth is an irresistible magnet and poverty is a potentially raging contaminant; it cannot be segregated." Peace and well-being in affluent nations corresponds largely to progress in others.

At the heat of all this is a single issue: why has the West become so rich and some regions dropped so far behind? Economic history, says Landes, can illumine the answer and tell us if the catch-up process can be accelerated. It should also provide awareness of the cultural adaptations and political commitments required for this—awareness, of course, being no guarantor of consequential happenings. In short, this is the Landes line: Know your history and you will know many things!

Landes delivers history on a panoramic scale. The superhighway of his book is the sustained advance of Europe—a millennium during which there was a virtual economic takeover of our planet by the Atlantic tip of Eurasia. Extending in time from the central Middle ages to the Victorian Era, this

thrust was achieved in five escalating and interlinked stages—technical innovation, exploration, imperial consolidation, the Industrial Revolution and modernization. At various moments, various nations led the march—Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, Britain—but it was always a European show. Along the way, these small, ill-formed countries overtook and often took over larger, more cohesive and culturally superior civilizations such as China, the Islamic empires and India.

Why this ascent? Landes proposes several reasons (geography, fragmentation of political power, systematized scientific investigation, proliferation of printing machines, etc.), but he assigns primacy to two: a relatively competitive market and a notion of individual property rights, both much less restrictive than in non-European states. But high tides do not last forever. The twentieth century brought a recession. Mighty European powers were shoved aside by the downdraft of events and the vitality of contenders—wars, decolonizations, strategic miscalculations, complacency, entrepreneurial constipation (as Landes colourfully calls it), and the champions of our time (America, Germany, Japan and, for a while, the Asian shooting-stars). Landes: "When one's country becomes smaller, one's self becomes smaller."

The organization of *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* consciously and unblushingly reflects its eurocentricism. An initial one-third of the text focuses on the roots of European growth. Among other credits, it attributes the very concept of economic development to Europe. The next one-fifth or so defines the Industrial revolution and explains why it began in Britain around 1770. This disquisition elaborates on the three pre-conditions (culture, money, knowledge) which made the transformation possible and then describes its spread to the Continent. Imperial expansion and non-European societies, a series of regional and civilizational case studies, absorb a further quarter of the manuscript. The concluding 20 per cent deals with Europe's loss of leadership, winners and losers, and where we are at present.

At first glance, this Euroweight seems excessive—a kind of flag-waving. However, Landes does make the point that his work is not a multicultural analysis nor a moral evaluation. His self-set markers limit this study to the evolution and impact of western civilization during the past ten centuries—the Age of Progress in which its influence has been commanding. Circumscribed by these boundaries, the treatment of external cultures is obviously a lesser priority, but where undertaken it



is generally knowledgeable and honest.

## II

What you get from Landes depends on how you read him. Casual perusers will find this a charming book, full of lively vignettes and anecdotes. It bubbles with capsules of impressive erudition which produce lots of disconnected insights relevant to current events—linkages not frequently made by the author. Here is a light sampling: History dooms Russia developmentally; from the Crimean to the Cold War, conflict always brings promising reform and reform brings nothing but misery. China, whose efforts at modernization have consistently been thwarted by palace intrigue, has traditionally sacrificed trade to political imperatives. The best clue to a nation's growth and prospects is the status and role of women. The most successful cures for poverty come from within—the meager value and high price of foreign assistance evokes an old African aphorism: "The hand that receives is always under the one that gives!" and so on. . .

In this vein, Landes has attractive ruminations on topography, climate and associated technologies. Geography, he declares, is not destiny but it is nonetheless a fateful influence. All the rich countries are located in the temperate zone while poverty invariably inhabits the tropics and semi-tropics. Despite its discomforts, winter is the great friend of humanity: silent killer of parasites, pests and disease-bearing insects. Refrigeration made spices unnecessary as food preservatives and destroyed a trade which provoked Europe's global outreach. Air-conditioning has forever transformed localities where heat and humidity once precluded prosperity—it is the principal agent in the revival of cities such as New Orleans, Houston and Singapore!

All this is well and good for those who like their history in engaging

soundbites. More serious readers will be distressed by elements that reduce a potentially outstanding exposition to a meandering and self-indulgent recapitulation. Given the well-worn path he treads, Landes cannot be expected to say anything conceptually very new. And he does not—*The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* contains little original scholarship of significance. There is no demerit in this. What disturbs is that Landes misses an opportunity to cohesively present a story vital to the public interest at this time. Within the confines of this volume is a luminous book, unfortunately obscured by the absence of clear-cut intellectual architecture.

Much of the fault lies in the tumbling nature of Landes' narrative. Although written with unusual elegance and wit, it is excessively discursive. Many supporting anecdotes divert rather than focus attention. Among the overload of distractions are more than one thousand foot-and-end-notes (some quite long) and sixty-six pages of bibliography. Often, the book is exhaustingly repetitive and tedious. Should we be told twice about the life of the British chemist Perkin or the condition of Algeria? Is it mandatory to describe almost every invention that contributed to the Industrial Revolution in Britain? Do Landes' particular dislikes—political correctness and radical theory—need to be assaulted over and over again? Could not the jarring overuse of the word "brittle" be reduced? On this showing, Landes' editor has certainly not earned his keep!

Beyond these concerns is a major problem of concluding perspective. In the end, after a thousand years and hundreds of pages, Landes' findings are thin and he has little to say about the future. The cop-out: "I do not want to advocate any particular national policy...." so, he winds up by essentially restating his opening proposition that the past leads to a growing and troubling rift between rich and poor today. Surely, this is inadequate. But

the author's counsel is simple: keep trying. In his world, the optimists have it because they are affirmative: "even when wrong, they are positive, and that is the way of achievement..." This Dale Carnegie imperative, the very medicine Landes recommends, is what has partly led us to the present pass. If hope alone can fuel economic development, Schweitzer's Lambarene and Mother Teresa's Calcutta should be like Rodeo Drive!

## III

While Landes' efforts do not give full expression to his undoubted scholarship and experience, they do stimulate some disquieting reflection. Take, for instance, the instructive value of European journey. The Europeans did inherit the earth for a long while. They were then an unworthy people—greedy, bloody, duplicitous; brave but savagely scornful of other cultures and faiths, not especially true to the higher forms of their own. Their advancement seems to have had little to do with moral character—it may even be due to lack of ennobling qualities. Indeed, as their public ethics have improved, and they have in recent days, material success has declined. Does this book bear muted confirmation that success and character are not conjoined? If so, what are the inducements and rewards for improving civic morality and humanity?

A second conundrum. Western civilization has, in recent decades, become universalized. In particular, its economic and entrepreneurial attributes have found ready resonance in certain non-western groups. Does this suggest that the true vectors of western civilization are now modernized Indians, east Asians and Middle Easterners? Are detested migrants merely asserting their cultural citizenship—a new notion of belonging and nationality liberated from geography? Is caucasoid Europe finished, never to rise again? Or can the Union be a plinth from which Europe will once more wrest global leadership, this time from its own offspring?

Landes' book is about progress and economic development but it also serves an ancillary purpose—recording the spread of capitalism. This, after all, has been Europe's most fruitful export, its seed taking root so vigorously that it almost monopolizes the world of economics. We know that political, economic and social monopolies do not function very well. What we still do not know is whether the present kind of big-screen monopoly—planetary in dimension—will work differently. Are its internal impulses sufficiently competitive to sustain dynamism or will

the excesses inherent in monopoly conspire to bring it down? This volume reminds us that Europe has had many systems (feudalism, monarchy, fascism, communism) whose regional or transcontinental monopoly appeared permanent, only soon to evanesce. Contemporary capitalism should harken this lesson.

## IV

*The Commanding Heights* is about the struggle through which this current dominance of capitalism has emerged. Its thesis is uncomplicated: The twentieth century is a battlefield on which two vision of economics have contended—a state-led ideology and market-driven approach. During the initial seventy years or so, political conditions favoured and thus induced unprecedented government interventions in economics. In the past two decades, the tide has been decisively reversed—a dramatic contraction of state influence and an expansion of market mechanisms. This capitalist upsurge and catalysts are privatization, decentralization, divestiture of state management, administrative downsizing, tax cuts and the globalization of finance via telecommunications. Yergin-Stanislav "the world over, governments have come to plan less, to own less and to regulate less... the decamping of the state from the commanding heights (of economics) marks a great divide between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries."

What is striking about Yergin-Stanislav's writing is not the novelty of their theme—hardly a secret to observers of international affairs—but the way it is laid out. We are taken on whirlwind tours through every continent. All over there is evidence that the marketplace has pushed and is pushing governments out of the economic sphere. This is documented extensively with dozens of countries examined to show how the state got into the economy, how things went bad and how it is now getting out. Almost ninety godfathers of private enterprise are interviewed, mostly theorists and policy wonks. There are too many has-beens here—too many views more nostalgic than penetrating. A few more practitioners (businessmen, entrepreneurs, managers, investors, traders and others who make the market work) would add a feel for the cutting-edge. Yet, in its own way, this imbalance mirrors the peculiarity of the present era of reform. The return of the market has been sponsored by an unexpected coterie of government officials, technocrats and bureaucrats, policy-planners and political figures—those who normally

*What is striking about Yergin-Stanislav's writing is not the novelty of their theme—hardly a secret to observers of international affairs—but the way it is laid out. We are taken on whirlwind tours through every continent. All over there is evidence that the marketplace has pushed and is pushing governments out of the economics sphere. This is documented extensively, with dozens of countries examined to show how the state got into the economy, how things went bad and how it is now getting out.*



*The Yergin-Stanislaw book is first-class reporting with all the strengths and few failings of the species. It is a splendid survey of what's happening, the quick and dirty on how the market came to defeat state intervention. True, Commanding Heights does leave readers a bit breathless, and its statistics will fast be left behind, but it is essential reading for anyone concerned with economics and the world at large.*

would be expected to back state intervention.

For a book suffused with detail and data remarkably few errors, at least to my reckoning, slip through the dragnet of accuracy. Inevitably some do (e.g., India's Ambassador car is modelled on the old Morris Oxford and not on the British Austin; former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao was rather ill-used by Rajiv Gandhi not by mother Indira as claimed). It is, then, all the more surprising that the authors' starting point is not quite on target. The "birth of privatization" and the first anti-state roll-back of significance was not by Margaret Thatcher (hers was the first in a major economy). It took place in Sri Lanka with the arrival of the Jayewardene Government in 1977, a few years before Thatcher began her flailings. This then attracted wide attention, partly because Sri Lanka had been in the vanguard of Third World socialism, partly because of loud International Monetary Fund/World Bank applause, largely because President Jayewardene's quixotic comments—"Let the robber barons come"—titillated the media. If minnows get mention—and they do (New Zealand, Bolivia, Ghana, etc.)—Sri Lanka deserves its mite.

These, however, are small carpings. The Yergin-Stanislaw book is first-class reporting with all the strengths and few failings of the species. It is a splendid survey of what's happening, the quick and dirty on how the market came to defeat state intervention. True, *Commanding Heights* does leave readers a bit breathless, and its statistics will fast be left behind, but it is essential reading for anyone concerned with economics and the world at large.

On the downside, the abundance of interviews and quotations from notables is excessive. Numerous profiles of the great and near-great needlessly clog already loaded intellectual pipelines. And do we really want to know that Nehru was nicknamed Joe at Harrow School, that Nkrumah's early education was by Catholic missionaries, or

that the young Jacques Delors established his own film club? Colour and spice are nice but this book is not enriched by such piddling tattle.

For all its appreciation of market forces, *Commanding Heights* is no ideological tract. Yergin-Stanislaw are not afraid to ask uncomfortable and presently unanswerable questions: Is the current pro-market mood a swing of the pendulum or something irreversible; what if the market cannot deliver widespread prosperity, employment or fairness; can it find a moral appeal in any way comparable to socialism; will a system lodged in self-interest and profits nurture an intolerable amount of greed and abuse of private power? Then, there is this prescient passage:

Of all the dangers [of the dominance of the market], perhaps the greatest threat... would arise from massive disruption of the international financial system... In the past, financial panics took weeks or even months to unfold. Now contagion can sweep through the world's markets in hours, endangering the entire edifice... The danger arises not from the possibility of a shock but rather from the convergence of several shocks at one time.

Clearly the authors' sense that the mastery of the market is more vulnerable than its cheerleaders allow, its ascent as yet tentative and unconfirmed. They know, and fear, that any crack in this fragile carapace will bring back the ethic of state intervention. What other alternative, if things go wrong?

## V

In their anxiety to construct the broadest possible picture Yergin-Stanislaw overlook some chinks. Take communism, which they evaluate as a long and formidable adversary of capitalism. This view, shared by so many, is myopic. Look further and the perspective is startlingly changed: Instead of being capitalism's enemy, communism

proves to be the seed bed of the private enterprise system. Every communist country has, within a few decades, become ardently capitalist or is on the way to becoming so. Marx and Lenin got it wrong when they saw capitalism as the stepping-stone to communism. It seems just the reverse way around.

Another item for the Believe It or Not column—the irony that capitalism, historically castigated as the exploiter of the toiling masses, has come to be regarded as the pathway to economic salvation of the poor. Its institutional persona, the multinational corporation, now finds welcome signs where once it was the Great Satan. In some areas, notably on the South China coast and in segments of Southeast and East Asia, capitalism is indeed the vehicle of a better life to the impoverished. Jeffrey Sachs of the Harvard Institute for International Development: "Global capitalism is surely the most promising institutional arrangement for worldwide prosperity that history has ever seen." The current crisis in Asia tests this proposition. Nonetheless, the notion remains as a fascinating reminder of how images are recast.

Here is more paradox. Capitalism without bankruptcy is like Christianity without hell; it is perdition which frightens the sin out of the system. But religious punishments are probably more condign—they are visited directly on the miscreants themselves. The wages of financial sin are inflicted on those who have no responsibility for its commission—investors, the public and even countries. The larger the iniquity, the larger the impact on others. Relief is essential and bailouts have to be engineered to lessen communal agony. This relief too frequently assuages the malefactors. Question: How can sinners be disciplined or reformed if there is no penalty for misdeeds?

Regular emergency rescues create a slipstream of fateful consequences. Control of the bailout, life or death for governments and countries, has begot the largest collective transfer of power in the twentieth century—the surrender of policy by governments to the International Monetary Fund. Today, the IMF is virtual economic hegemon and arbiter of public policy in more than one-half of the nations in the world. Massive shifts of power in the past were diffusions—collapse of the old emperors after World War I or the handing over of colonial territories to native peoples after World War II. They were born from the womb of terrible conflict and general mayhem. Now, on a scale unprecedented in our time, there is an effortless in-gathering of authority; authority reinforced with dreadful punitive capacities. It is a process diffi-

cult to resist—nations in dire economic trouble, often self-inflicted, need a life saver and the IMF is the only one capable of performing this invaluable service.

It will be interesting to know whether Yergin-Stanislaw, so busy on the commanding heights, recognize this as a critical issue. Are the IMF and its affiliates beneficial, menacing or rivals to markets and governments? Will the marketplace eventually be subordinated to IMF compulsions? Properly organized markets and governments are accountable and the wielders of power within these bailiwicks can be ousted by elections or revolutions. Only retirement or death removes the Lords of the IMF, the rulers of the least transparent empire on earth—and this kind of tenure gives special immunities and advantages to those who hold it.

A final word—people matter. In another context, Landes says it well: "The weakness of autocracy is in the human raw material." The inference is pertinent to the order that Yergin-Stanislaw foresee. This marketplace civilization will only prevail if it does more than merely secure the triumph of the capitalist system. It will have to undertake creative ventures, prove that social tasks can be efficiently handled by private enterprise, build a moral case for the preferment of business, show that it is superior to state organisms in the services it provides, demonstrate that it can resist the corruptions by which bureaucracies have forfeited public confidence. Execution of this agenda demands a distinctive breed of entrepreneur-manager. So, if Landes' world of coming clashes is to be avoided and Yergin-Stanislaw's world of the marketplace is to be sustained, they and we had better think about the quality of men and women who can do the job.

Both Landes and Yergin-Stanislaw agree that the end of the twentieth century is a pivotal moment. Their prescriptions are not very far apart—faith and hope in the future, faith and hope in the marketplace. Yet, this will take us only part of the way. To reach further, we will need much more wisdom—an understanding which also conflates and incorporates Landes' historical comprehension with Yergin-Stanislaw's analytical precision. This ideal roadmap to economic destiny has not yet arrived. Until then, we can well make do with books like these.

*Ralph Buultjens, former Nehru Professor at Cambridge University, teaches at New York University. He is the author of several books on modern history and political economy, and is a Toynbee Prize Laureate.*



# In Quest Of New Perspectives

Sumi Krishna

POPULATION, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Edited by R.K. Pachauri and Lubina F. Qureshy

Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi, 1997, pp. 357, price not stated.

ENVIRONMENTALISM: POLITICS, ECOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

By Pravin Sheth

Rawat Publications, 1997, pp. 338, Rs. 500.00

Indian scholarship has for long been characterized by a disinclination to cross the narrowly-defined boundaries of traditional "subjects". With a few exceptions, Indian universities have responded sluggishly to the global trend of inter-disciplinary studies. So, although expertise and analytical rigour within these established "subjects" is often impressive, there has been considerable difficulty in shifting the academic focus to new questions and areas of concern (environmental or gender studies, for example) which require multi-disciplinary approaches and analyses. However, in recent years, this task has been taken over by some re-

search institutions and non-government organisations (NGOs), and also by a few individual scholars. Both the books under review here—like many others now being published—are a reflection of the attempt to traverse disciplines in quest of fresh perspectives.

One quick method of building bridges between different areas of concern, and between theory and praxis, is to get a cross-section of professionals together to discuss a common theme. This is the method adopted by the Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi to examine the complex inter-linkages between population, environment and development. Another method is adopted by political scientist Pravin Sheth of the Gujarat Vidyapeeth to unravel the politics of ecology and development by bringing his specialist knowledge to bear on other disciplinary areas. This requires gaining an understanding of these other subjects, a more ambitious and difficult task.

The TERI publication consists of the carefully edited and referenced papers presented at a conference on population, environment and development, organized by the Tata Energy and Resources Institute—North America (TERI-NA) in Washington, D.C., in 1996. Given their very varied specializations and backgrounds, the contributors from the U.S., India and other nations, inevitably produce papers that are extremely diverse both in content and scale. As most contributors tend to stay within their own areas of expertise and experience, and the volume does not provide any record of the interventions or discussions, the difficult task of synthesis is then left to the editors. Their

problem is apparent in the hodge-podge sequence of the papers themselves—speculations on how many people the world can support; biodiversity conservation in the Philippines; transmigration in Lampung, Indonesia; water problems in the Middle East; a review of poverty and economic growth in India over two decades; an analysis of census data in Kota district (Rajasthan) India; energy development in China; the spiritual and cultural case against the Tehri Dam project in Uttarakashi, India; conflicts arising from population and environmental stress; global warming; and the environmental case for vegetarianism.

Professor Sheth's book, on the other hand, is somewhat more organized in the sequence of chapters, moving from India's cultural traditions, and general environmental problems through a discussion of environment and society, laws, policies and institutional structures, and the "ecodynamics of system operation". This is followed by a review of environmental rights and activism, and a consideration of democratic and sustainable models of development. However, despite the apparent order, the book tends to be an assortment of different views that do not cohere. Swings in style from chapter to chapter, awkward language, poor editing, very careless referencing—even blithely paraphrasing and quoting from other authors without acknowledgement—detracts from the intellectual commitment with which one presumes scholars conduct their research.

Both books under review are concerned with "sustainable development". The editors of the TERI volume see the economy as a sub-system of a larger ecosystem, and some of the contributors have attempted to address the dynamics of larger ecosystems. Sheth too veers to the view that ecology forms the basis of development, but his book treats ecology in a most cursory manner. It is also interesting that although both TERI and Sheth are concerned about the linkages between environment/ecology and development, the focus that each adopts seems to totally exclude that of the other. So, while population is the point of convergence for the TERI book, and it advocates a "global perspective" (Maurice Strong in his Foreword), the international political systems within which population policies and programmes are formulated are neglected. Sheth puts political systems at the core, but he ignores the population question altogether.

As is well known, the historical roots of the population debate lie in Malthusian concerns about the rate of growth of food production vis-à-vis

*The political questions of rights and distributive justice, and the politicisation of institutional structures are central to Pravin Sheth's book, and he deals with this in some detail. But the trouble with this study is that the attempt to link the political domain to ecology-development (subject areas with which he is much less acquainted) is conceptually confused and often contradictory.*

the rate of increase in the size of populations. The apprehension, sometimes unspoken and sometimes explicit, has been that increasing numbers of poor people would undermine economic development, leading to political conflicts. Responses have varied from coercive means of controlling fertility directly to the more moderate developmental path of improving women's health and education as an indirect means of reducing births. In recent decades, the parameters of the old population debate, once the preserve of demographers and development economists, have been altered by the newer environmental and gender perspectives. Natural resource managers have extended the debate to include (besides food) a whole gamut of resources: biomass, water, energy etc. The environmental movement has furthered the argument that the demographic equation is governed not just by numbers of people vis-à-vis resources, but also by levels of consumption. Many environmentalists have also related the patterns of consumption to the political question of distributive justice, and to the nature of national and global political economies. Approaching the question from another angle, the women's movement has sharpened the population debate by challenging the patriarchal mode of conventional theories of socio-economic change. It has questioned the legitimacy of most methods of controlling women's fertility, and some sections have emphasized women's strategic need for autonomy of choice and control over their own lives. Though control of contraception may not be the critical issue in the population-envi-

*The historical roots of the population debate lie in Malthusian concerns about the rate of growth of food production vis-à-vis the rate of increase in the size of populations. The apprehension, sometimes unspoken and sometimes explicit, has been that increasing numbers of poor people would undermine economic development, leading to political conflicts.*



*Being more concerned with the contemporary scene and policies for the future, the TERI book does not go into the genesis of the population debate, but its broad thrust supports a moderate path of economic development, as a means to population stabilization. It moves beyond the concerns of the old population debate and "the natural resource concerns of environmentalists, like water, cropland and fisheries.*

environment debate, it has been argued that such control could be liberating for women, a factor in their empowerment.

Being more concerned with the contemporary scene and policies for the future, the TERI book does not go into the genesis of the population debate, but its broad thrust supports a moderate path of economic development, as a means to population stabilization. It moves beyond the concerns of the old population debate and "the natural resource concerns of environmentalists, like water, cropland and fisheries (Robert Engelman). Moreover, the book distinguishes between the environmental effects of commercial consumption and those of subsistence (Paris Reidhead, Lubina Qureshy and Vishal Narain). However, it stops short of dealing with the political structures of inequity and power relations in society, both within nations and between them. And it pays scant attention to the political questions of gender.

The most comprehensive and lucid paper is that by Robert Repetto of World Resources Institute (WRI), Washington. Over two decades ago, the Ford Foundation's *Second India Study* had looked at the prospects of a doubling of India's population (a "second India") and envisaged possible scenarios for the year 2000. With that doubling in sight, the World Resources Institute (WRI), Washington, and a group of Indian experts have now reassessed the earlier study. Repetto says the reassessment showed that while there was value in looking ahead at the implications of massive population growth, there was need for humility in making predictions. The study anticipated many problems that have not materialized. For instance, energy requirements have been greatly reduced by the untried conversion of the steel industry from open hearth to electric arc furnaces, and the cement industry from wet to dry processes. So too, the policy shift away from heavy industry as a development strategy has reduced the environmental impacts and capital requirements of growth (p. 156). Tracing

the interactions of population growth, economic development and environmental stress over 20 years, Repetto says what has "emerged most strongly over the 20 years since the *Second India Study* is the importance of social and cultural determinants in the demographic transition—especially the place of women in society" (p. 159). Looking back, Repetto points out that neither technology nor resources have been intractable problems, but development has faltered over institutional and policy-related stumbling blocks. The key issue in this view is that of "creating mechanisms, whether through market incentives, community organisations or other means of governance to bring the interests of individuals in line with those of the community" (p. 173).

By locating the problem essentially as one of the individual versus the community, and the solution as better governance, Repetto's approach overlooks the conflict of interests between classes and communities within the nation, and the pressures of international interests. Indeed, in the TERI book, the only contributor who alludes to the international political economy is politician Emil Salim, formerly Indonesia's Minister for Environment and Population.

The political questions of rights and distributive justice, and the politicisation of institutional structures are central to Pravin Sheth's book, and he deals with this in some detail. But the trouble with this study is that the attempt to link the political domain to ecology-development (subject areas with which he is much less acquainted) is conceptually confused and often contradictory.

Endorsing Vandana Shiva's romanticised vision of Mother Earth and of Indian civilization as having arisen from the forests, Sheth says, "the lotus is another dominant symbol of the ethics and bliss of ecology" (sic. p. 25). In his view, "Nature is the expression of energy which is the feminine expression of creative principle of the

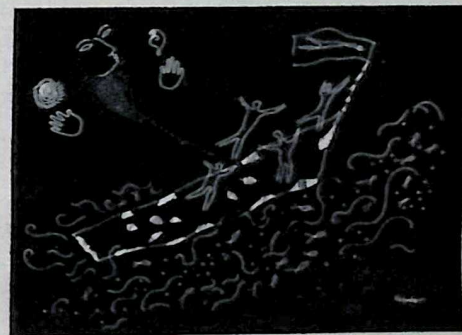
cosmos" (sic. p. 86). He takes quite literally Tagore's emotional image of the struggle against colonialism as the breaking of a dam to let the river waters flow to the people downstream to support the environmental case against dams. And yet, when it comes to the Narmada dam project, in his native Gujarat, he feels it is now "environmentally benign" (p. 100), reaching "ever higher level (sic.) of performance" (p. 148), a "development project with a clean break with the past experience" (p. 250). Sheth's argument that the voice of the water-starved poor of Gujarat needs to be heard, that anti-dam activists have resorted to exaggeration and misinformation in the press, and that environmentalists are often negative and obstructive are perhaps valid, but what are we to make of his own doublespeak: development for the Narmada valley, but not in other areas?

Sheth is quite right in pointing out that the politics of environment has not been adequately explored, but his own attempt to do so is disappointing. Perhaps, this is just because his use of the English language is so convoluted—a good editor may have helped. But there is also a deeper conceptual problem. On the one hand, he seems to empathize with a *people's politics* (although questions of gender are almost wholly excluded), and with the radical transfor-

mation of society by non-party, non-governmental political activity. On the other hand, he cannot bring himself to endorse environmental NGOs whose record is uneven, and whom he also distrusts because of their anti-Narmada dam stance. Sheth's dilemma is not uncommon. The trouble is that he does not seem to recognize this.

Both the books under review seek to take forward the debate on environment/ecology and development, although each has a different focus of concern: population in the TERI volume, politics in Sheth's study. Each has adopted a different formula to gain an inter-disciplinary perspective on the issues. Such endeavours are welcome, although the outcome is not satisfactory in either case. I think the lack of conceptual clarity in the hodge-podge contents of the TERI book and the uncertain perspective of Sheth's book arises at least partly from the methodological problem of traversing inter-disciplinary boundaries. The intellectual effort required to analyze and understand complex interlinkages cannot be overcome by short-cut methods.

*Sumi Krishna, an independent scholar on environment-development and gender, is the author of Environmental Politics, People's Lives and Development Choices.*



### *A Ship Drowning*

*A ship drowning,  
calling out for help  
in a lashing sea,*

*I tossed in this ocean of births  
when the lord  
in his splendor,  
bearing wheel and conch,  
called out to me: "O, O, you there!"*

*showed me his grace,  
and became one with me.*

*Tamil to English by A.K. Ramanujan  
From "Hymns for The Drowning"*



# The Secular as a Public Theatre

Shiv Vishvanathan

IN THE NAME OF THE SECULAR: CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL ACTIVISM IN INDIA

By Rustom Bharucha

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998, pp. 198, Rs. 395.00

I like secularism. It is secularists I don't like. They take my poetic world and turn it into dull prose. What should be celebrated in citizenly ease and even silence, they recite like catechism. What should be lived out quietly, they hallelujah like born-again converts. I love the Nehruvian years and the constitution but when secularists approach them they do so hysterically. Secularism for them is not a dwelling, a being-in-the-world. Just like the VHP and the BJP is irritated with Hinduism, secularists don't feel easy with the secular. They don't see that secularism, like Hinduism, is a way of life.

The problem of secularism gets aggravated by a sense of crisis. There is panic that the Nehruvian world has faded and there is an impending sense of the BJP entering every crevice. Secularists behave like geocentric scientists building elaborate epicycles to their world. It is a world in crisis, full of Stakhonovites working overtime, reworking every phrase, every word, every sentence. There is a hysteria which mirrors the world of Rithambara. But there are two problems more specific to academic secularism.

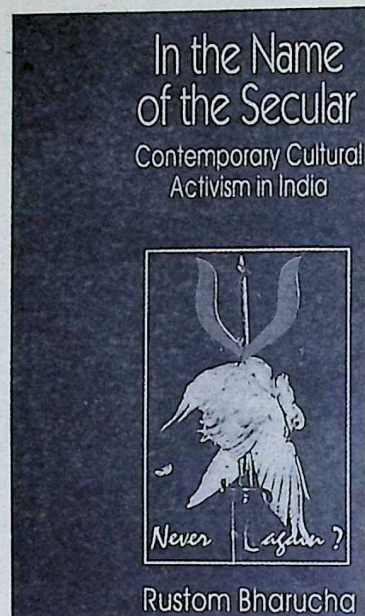
*There are many incidental but valuable spin-offs to the book. When secularism is the last straw of the Left, it starts re-reading its relation to the state. It learns to be less lethal about slight differences in perspective and therefore becomes less fratricidal. In fact it may look more openly at the religious roots of creativity instead of instrumentally and mechanically utilizing the Bhakti movement. In fact all this seems a part of Bharucha's search.*

Firstly, it uses woodenly the tools of discourse analysis. Such a frame becomes a disciplinary matrix, a behavioural corset. Secularism becomes a dull grammar without an ordinary language. There is no trace of poetry, myth, even jokes, which allow for a play of language, for alchemy, ambiguity and metamorphosis. You can't improvise like a jazz musician with the music of current day secularism. In fact, if you scratch a secularist you see the mentality of a Victorian governess. Worse, the writings of many of them have been a losing battle with the manifestoes of Ashis Nandy. They fire blunderbusses at the latter when a laugh will do.

Secondly academic secularism has all the mentality of the club. Secularism becomes not only politically correct but also incestuous. The same ten people are referred to leading to an inane repetition of the twenty sacred terms for secularism instead of a thousand names for God. The members also employ these terms as semaphores of recognition. In fact, at seminars, you can see 'official' secularists smile smugly when key words are displayed like flashcards. It is the QED look. It is life in a Masonic lodge and mixing with them you feel you have read the wrong books or gone to the wrong schools.

I keep wondering how secularism is going to escape its ideologues and breathe again without the corsets of a dull discourse analysis. I want a secularism that roams the streets and yet is easy about the academe, a secularism that does not get caught in the idiot official oppositions of science and religion, which sees identity as a hummock of selves rather than a monocultural aloneness or emptiness. A secularism alive to its own tensions and constantly inventive.

I am stating all this because the secular is a sticky minefield where it is difficult to criticize without being immediately dubbed fundamentalist or communal. So with these caveats, let me move on to *In the Name of the Secular*. The title smacks of old testament prophecy but fortunately the book turns



out to be tentative, honest, clear, an open work. You can sip your tea and disagree happily with the author.

Rustom Bharucha calls himself a cultural worker. One blanches at the term. The associations are terrible. It reminds one of sexual workers and scientific workers but may be not as bad as the second. Bharucha's work swings in my mind's eye like a pendulum. His tract on the danseuse Chandralekha was embarrassing hagiography, all icon and little sense of the person, like a Kathakali mask without the dance of eyes behind it. His *In Search of the Sacred* was a moving pamphlet, but his *In the Name of the Secular* convinces me that secularism is a tiresome and tiring business and that Bharucha wants a way out of it.

Bharucha opens in an easy way. He realizes that the Nehruvian world is no longer adequate as a framework for the secular. One has to find out why and then invent one's way out of trouble. Secularism is no longer a Nehruvian nostalgia. He also claims that secularism will no longer be equated with anti-communalism and rightly warns that "it is the surest way for dissent to be determined by communal categories." Here, one realizes, is a man who wants to be inventive. This, in particular, is heartening for secularism so far as it has been a problem of consumption, of diffusion like an immunization project. One is expected to swallow huge doses of ideological pap. But Bharucha is easy and even dismisses the likes of Badal Sircar as tired and empty and opens his lenses to scrutinize *Sahmat*.

*Sahmat* has its origins in the life and death of Safdar Hashmi, a brilliant and courageous man who died fighting Congress goons. *Sahmat* was formed as

a mode of protest against such brutality. But what began as an attempt to memorialize an act of courage has become a club. Bharucha realizes that there is something self-defeating about the salons of the secular. He criticizes the umbilical relation between *Sahmat* and the state, or one fragment of it called Arjun Singh. (Pity it gives him a clean hit on the Bhopal disaster). He wants that *Sahmat*, despite its courageous intervention in and at Ayodhya, might become affable. Bharucha whets one's appetite for an internal critique and then stops. I wish he had analyzed how Left historians ran in panic to the patriarchal state during the controversy over the rewriting of history books. I wish he had also referred to the way Nur Hassan and his nepotistic—secular—nepotistic—ilk ran the Ministry of Education because then one can also talk about BJP infiltration of administrative positions. The norms are declared, the evaluation is fair and both devils get their due. Or is it that secularism does not deal with devils but only has a demonology? I even wish he had time to examine how signatories of the scientific temper are now happily BJP. And behind this lies an important question. Is there a link between secularism and the scientific temper or can fascists be good scientists? I think the kind of spring cleaning is necessary for secularism to thaw. A clearer statement of the past and a need to move away from secularist ideologues and their repressive apparatus. You then don't have to worry about idiot accusations of "pseudo-secularism." Authenticity and playfulness begins with openness, error, recognition of error, and laughter. Do secularists laugh or do they, like L.K. Advani confuse the authoritarian with the authoritative? Both are ideal candidates for the Smyle tooth gel ad.

Bharucha's critique of *Sahmat* sets the stage for such openness. His sections on the IPTA are fascinating even as vignettes. I only wish he had elaborated more on the gentle secularism of Dina Pathak, or even of a Balraj Sahni because theirs was secularism as a way of life and therefore intensely appealing. Bharucha is sensitive to the possibilities and even the construction of IPTA as nostalgia, even Utopia and is also clear about its ideological constraints and the quarrels between artists and ideologues, both unlivable groups. I wish he had followed through an interesting and obvious question. How much of art remains in these shows? Are they only secular or was there artistry left in these fragments of secular realism. Some of these performances seem utterly boring. I like my secularism to be entertaining. I don't want to be educated technology mission style



There are many incidental but valuable spin-offs to the book. When secularism is the last straw of the Left, it starts re-reading its relation to the state. It learns to be less lethal about slight differences in perspective and therefore becomes less fratricidal. In fact it may look more openly at the religious roots of creativity instead of instrumentally and mechanically utilizing the Bhakti movement. In fact all this seems a part of Bharucha's search. How to look at difference differently? His secularism, like Maggi sauce, may be really different. It might renew the relation between Gandhi and Marx, composting Marxism in new and unexpected ways. Just these efforts might make secularism worthwhile. In fact it is this sense of critique, even of tentativeness, even of bumblingness, that makes Bharucha's work appealing. Hence secularism is an invitation, not a mode of professional expertise. In fact I wish Bharucha would refer more to voices on the ground than his references to academics, those gatekeepers of dullness whose permission you need to suffer, to exist as subaltern, or even be recognized as citizen or text.

Bharucha generally evades the expertise of the secular. I wish he had, in a playful way, contrasted *Sahmat* with DSF or KSSP. One needs a Brechtian look at these latter groups who also function as custodians of the secular. If the secular is not just a world of the religiously empty but one where religion is no longer the only determinant of identity, then the role of religion in this hummock of identities must be refigured. He has asides on this in his comments on Birju Maharaj and Chandrlekha but Bharucha is still walking on eggs. I wish he would Zorba it.

Bharucha gets caught in the divide between science and arts and he unconsciously does not include popular science groups as cultural workers. What is the relation of science to secularism? What is the relation of science to religion? The picture of the old ideological battle is tripe. Historians have time and again shown the roots of science and the scientific crisis in its religious world views. One has to sniff a Duhem, Jakir or Yates to see this with clarity. If so, the relation between religion, and science has to be reworked and continuously reinvented. Unfortunately this becomes the big silence in Bharucha's work. It is the illiteracy about religion that makes secularism so truncated and rickety. It is strange that Bharucha refers to this in his study of the Third Sector Movement in Brazil, the best part of the book. It is interesting that when he deals with secularism in India, he deals with it as text, as grammar, as code, but when he

studies Brazil, he looks and discusses secularism as a performance. It is the performative aspect of secularism that one misses in his discussion of *Sahmat* or IPTA.

In fact there are several quotes in the book which can be read both ways. Bharucha quotes a policeman as saying "No communal riot can last more than 24 hours without the consent of the state". One is equally worried that most secular spectacles suffer from the same problem. He quotes Tagore as observing:

"When religions travel from their sacred sources, they lose their original dynamic rigour and degenerate into an arrogance of piety, into an utter emptiness crammed with irrational habits and mechanical practices..."

When I was reading it I substituted secularism for religion and the sentence made equal sense and it is this that needs to be addressed.

There is a lot of this book that is a close analysis of Mani Ratnam's *Roja*. It is good stuff. Bharucha feeds it through the grid of fascism, patriarchy, state and of course *Roja* fails gloriously. You can no longer say a *Roja* is a *Roja* is a *Roja* after film critics have finished with it. Seminars on *Roja* probably have more re-runs than the film itself. But what Bharucha leaves untouched is why or what in these films taps into the unconscious of the masses. What is it that makes one prefer a Barjaty to an Anand Patwardhan? What makes the latter look artificial? In fact when Patwardhan explains his own movie one does not want to see it. It is over determined explanation. Fortunately his film eludes his own explanations of it.

I would still watch *Hum Apke Hain Kaun* than all the people Bharucha recommends. Why is it I feel I am being dragged to a boring seminar, a didactic lecture, a politically correct behaviour class when I approach a Vivan Sundaram, Anand Patwardhan or Satish Sharma? It is this that secularists need to ask. Partly Bharucha's theory of culture is theory of exhibits. One senses an unease about popular culture. Maybe I am imagining it but Bharucha strokes popular cultures as if he is petting someone else's pet line. Nonetheless Bharucha's book is a good beginning. He has opened up the internal critique of the Left, and the secular, and it is precisely this readiness that creates the secular as a public theatre. May it multiply but not in capital letters.

*Shiv Visvanathan is with the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. He is the author of Carnival of Science (OUP, 1997).*

## "Who Counts?"

T.C.A. Ramanuja Chari

TOWARDS JUSTICE AND VIRTUE: A CONSTRUCTIVE ACCOUNT OF PRACTICAL REASONING

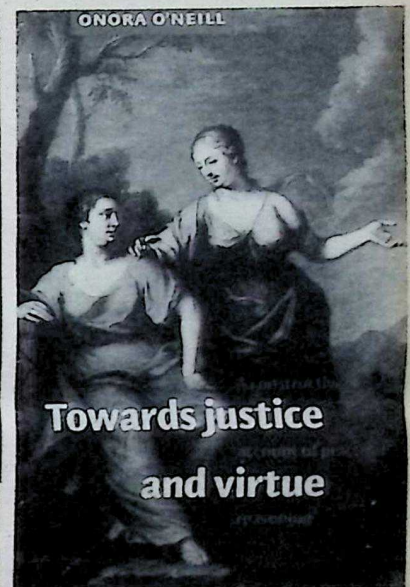
By Onara O'Neill

Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 230, £12.95

The lives of humans are shaped by fundamental categories and concepts that, over long stretches of time, have been a part of their being and thought and sense of their identity—part of what makes them human. In pre-modern societies these fundamental categories and concepts were formulated either by command or by tradition. 'Command', usually attributed to divine ordinance and emanating from an authority which, by convention or common consent, was unquestioned or unquestionable. It therefore, admitted of no rational critique or exception or exemption. But where the code evolved by tradition over a period of time, an element of choice can be detected as what went into the code grew out of social interaction and exigencies of contingent human situations.

Tradition initially provided, if the Promethean myth is to be believed, security and mutual protection as the fundamental category which, in turn encouraged living together. Social life needed rules, conventions and customs to regulate the living together. Man, thus, came to live under the matrix of some injunctions of universal applicability like those proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount or those contained in the sacred books of other religions. These injunctions transformed themselves into principles of justice understood as a repertoire of rights, protection, and entitlements that apply irrespective of persons and have overriding force wherever they apply. The technical proficiency of not violating such codes of conduct was regarded as virtue.

Homer saw justice as being identical with order and authority. Plato derived justice from instinct and inspiration. Aristotle derived the principles of justice by logical analysis of the mores and customs of existing societies. For both Plato and Aristotle the principle of balance and harmony became the test of a



just society and of a just individual. What was common to both was a comprehensive idea of virtue of which justice was a part and an aspect. Justice and virtue stayed aligned till the beginning of the Age of Enlightenment.

When the West got its Enlightenment, Reason and the sovereignty of the individual were annointed as the core principles of the human way of life. In the cultural milieu that followed 'modernism' became the dominant mode and the fundamental categories constituting Justice became matters of choice. Rational justification was not the only criterion of choice. The sovereignty of the individual and possessive individualism born out of enlightened self-interest certified 'pragmatic' context-specific justification as the criterion. Thus justice and virtue became rivals and antinomies in philosophic thought about ethics.

Onara O'Neill investigates in her *Towards Justice and Virtue* whether positioning of the two as rival and binary,



*'Command', usually attributed to divine ordinance and emanating from an authority which, by convention or common consent, was unquestioned or unquestionable. It therefore, admitted of no rational critique or exception or exemption.*

instead of being complementary categories is warranted by logic or practice. She begins with an overview of the current thinking on the subject in the disciplines of ethics and political philosophy. She notices that contemporary thought views justice as a bundle of universal and abstract principles, and virtue as the measure for judging and responding to particular situations and relationships.

O'Neill demonstrates in chapter one, reasonably convincingly, that the disjunction between justice and virtue is historically anomalous and not well substantiated, and has been erected by making a range of questionable assumptions about action and reason. She argues that politics and ethics are, essentially, domains of activity and the reasoning that governs this domain must, in the final analysis, be practical reasoning—that is, 'reasoning which we and others can use both in personal and public life not merely to judge and appraise what is going on, not merely to assess what has been done, but to guide activity. The activities to be guided range from institution building and reforms to the daily acts and attitudes of personal life' (p. 2).

This demand has two aspects. The first is that some way or ways of guiding activity must be shown to have the sort of authority that would allow it to be described as reasoned. The second is that those ways of guiding action must be practical in that they can help agents with quite limited and determined capacities to live their lives (p. 2).

'Practical reason' sounds mysterious. What O'Neill wants that phrase to mean is that it is not sufficient for thought on ethics to begin either with some conception of the objectively good, whether inherent or transcendent, or from some conception of the subjectively good or from the particularities of common or individual life. It

is necessary, further, that any account of ethics must include, in addition to convincing starting points, convincing prescriptions regarding methods for proceeding from those starting points. In chapter two she suggests how an account of practical reason may be constructed without relying on unproved/unprovable assumptions (e.g.; human behaviour being rational or autonomous at all times and under all circumstances; the perfect competition of economics; idealized notions about the categories and practices of traditions or the actual sensibilities and commitments of individuals).

Onara O'Neill says that 'practical reason' can be end-oriented, that is, reasoned action is directed by moral considerations or ideals; or be instrumental, that is, directed by subjective preferences, desires and conceptions of what is good; or be action-oriented, that is, be informed by principles that can be followed by all in the relevant domain; or be particularistic, that is, reasoned action is informed by norms and commitments of individuals. She finds all these approaches to be somewhat inadequate and feels persuaded to adopt a 'limited and strictly modal Kantian account which identifies it with reliance on principles which (it is judged) can be principles for all, where the scope of 'all' is taken to vary with context (p. 52). She explains that such an account must answer two questions, namely, by whom should that type of reasoning be followable and what makes that so followable. The first question relates to the scope of such reasoning and the second to the criterion of acceptability.

Scope is determined by situationally relevant demands and compulsions. Thus, a country well equipped with nuclear capability may not like other countries to acquire even matching, let alone superior, capabilities. Another

*O'Neill's effort is to construct a model of practical reasoning of which the focus will be 'action, hence principles of action indeed specifically universal principles of action' yet, not to scare away or raise the hackles of the opponents of ethical universalism.*

country feeling threatened or apprehending potent threats to its integrity or very existence may like to acquire superior capability including nuclear capability. The former would find certain principles of thought and action followable which may not be such to the latter. Both would justify their particular choices on the footing of equally plausible principles of justice and virtue. The situationally relevant demands and compulsions would make the choice of the particular combination of principles of thought and action acceptable to one protagonist and not so to the other.

O'Neill does not seek to inquire into the validity of the choice from amongst the rival perspectives. She attempts to show how 'practical reason' can be constructed by either. O'Neill says: 'A convincing conception of practical reasoning although highly abstract, still must start from the gritty realities of human life: it cannot provide reasons for anyone to adopt principles which they cannot adopt. Since practical reasoning has many audiences, some more restricted and others more inclusive, it may and indeed must on different occasions rely on more abstract and on more specific views of the character of those audiences (p. 61). [Kant described reasoning which appealed to restricted audiences as 'private use of reasoning' and that which appealed to more inclusive audiences as 'public uses of reasoning']

For constructing either type of reasoning O'Neill adopts the example made famous by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant explained that the wish may be for constructing a tower that would reach to the heavens but the available stock of material would permit only a single storey dwelling. Then only a single storey dwelling can be constructed. O'Neill calls this technique for constructing the edifice of practical reasoning 'constructivism'. This is no more than a technique of coordination in using available material, as for constructing a building, to formulate a paradigm or thesis in an intellectual discourse. She says: 'Constructivism is in the end no more, but no less, than an attempt to work towards a result that is neither unattainable for those whose lives are both led using the categories and norms of a restricted milieu and connected to those others with different categories and norms, nor unsustainable for what they could become' (p. 64).

O'Neill's effort is to construct a model of practical reasoning of which the focus will be 'action, hence principles of action indeed specifically universal principles of action' yet, not to scare away or raise the hackles of the

opponents of ethical universalism. The latter variety of philosophers of ethics charge Kantian, and even utilitarian positions of excessive preoccupation with inclusive, universal and prescriptive uniformity of principles and rule in particular with principles of obligation. They chafe at the resulting rigidity of application, particularly in relation to the principles of obligation. They charge their rivals of sanctimonious lack of sensitivity or concern for the infinite variety and difference between persons and situations of human interest and poignancy. It is this variety that provides the material and premise for formulating principles of universal applicability. Onara O'Neill has chosen to render a 'more limited and strictly modal Kantian account' of practical reason. Therefore, her anxiety not to offend the sensibilities of the advocates of context specific virtue is understandable as her purpose is, apparently, to construct a thesis which commands wider intellectual acceptability.

The first step in this process of construction is to determine the focus of practical reasoning which O'Neill does in chapter 3. In her Introduction to the book at p. 4 'chapter 3 argues that, action, hence principles of action, indeed universal principles of action must be the focus of practical reasoning. She explains that 'action' may be understood or explained in different ways. One is in the light of the 'ends' that it is intended to achieve. Another is in the light of the 'principles' which guide that action or which that action embodies. A third way is to explain that action by the source (dispositions, traits of character, motive) which sets in motion that action. A fourth way is to explain it by the form it takes. Thoughts on ethics choose one or more of these different ways of explaining 'action' and thus arise different prescriptions, proscriptions, recommendations and warnings regarding the right type of action.

O'Neill however seems to be somewhat uncertain about what her focus should be. She says at p. 64 that chapter 3 will argue that action, hence principles of action rather than either sources or the results of action, must be the primary focus of practical reasoning including any ethical and political reasoning, and including reasoning about virtue.' But at p. 89 she says: 'First, action is the primary focus of all practical reasoning including practical reasoning which treats either the sources or the results of action as the primary matter of ethical concern.' This vacillation is, perhaps due to her commitment to a Kant inspired 'modal account' and her unwillingness to hurt advocates of context



*Towards Justice and Virtue, which is described as a constructive account of practical reasoning is a book by a plumber for other plumbers in the academic disciplines of ethics and political philosophy. As such it is a little difficult reading for the lay reader.*

and interest specific virtue and their aversion to universal and binding principles or generalized rules however indeterminate these may be. Thus her conclusions in chapter 3 fall in place.

These conclusions are: 'Action must be grasped under descriptions that are intelligible to those who reason about it... The need for intelligible description does not mean that practical reasoning must or can avoid abstraction or that it cannot use principles... Universal principles which abstract from many predicates, need not prescribe uniform action, even within their domain; they may prescribe differentiated action, and they must underdetermine action... While the degree of underdetermination of action is open, there is no reason to think that the underdetermination is radical in the sense which Wittgenstein's discussion of rule-following is sometimes thought to suggest' (p. 89). She goes on to explain that her intention is to defuse anxiety about principles, and specifically about principles of universal form or inclusive scope. She admits that her arguments do not show either which practical principles are ethically important or which sorts of practical principles are ethical or for which domains universal principles of various sorts might hold (p. 89).

After 'focus' comes 'scope' of ethical concern which is dealt with in chapter 4. The argument of this chapter is that the area of ethical consideration is determined by how particular actors conceive of the role of themselves and those with whom they interact in particular situations or on a continued basis. O'Neill says that 'what is assumed in action and in attitudes cannot be used to fix the proper scope of ethical consideration in a given context' (p. 4). In her view the proper questions to be asked for determining the scope of

ethical consideration are not 'who or what counts as moral agent or subject?' or 'What are the criteria of personhood?' but 'Whom or what do particular agents have grounds to include within the scope of their practical reasoning and of their ethical consideration?' She considers that the former set of questions give rise to futile debates that demand but do not yield satisfactory answers. In answer to the latter question she says no one can exclude from the domain of reasoning or ethical consideration those others with whom they interact or those with or against whom they act. The bottomline is that each individual has a world of his or her own which is altogether different from and far smaller than the world at large. Consequently, the scope of ethical consideration is not monolith but small, atomised, different and context- and interest-specific. She deftly weaves into this the place of distant strangers and future generations.

O'Neill, then, in chapter 5, turns her attention—after showing that 'popular arguments' about the incompatibility of justice and virtue are unconvincing—to analyse the structure, content and the compatibility of the principles of justice and virtue. She points out that even though 'justice' may be abstract and universal and 'virtue' is responsive to particularities a measure of abstraction which does not encourage idealized conceptions of those abstractions is an unavoidable feature of all reasoning, 'hence of practical reasoning, and indeed of all thought and language' (p. 122). She develops the idea that a modal conception, as the one that she has chosen, will prefer principles which state 'requirements' which are capable of guiding action. This capacity arises from the feature that 'requirements' link up acts and categories of acts and also the actors and their others with or against whom they interact. She illustrates the linkages by the example that 'if A owes B an act of a certain type or its omission, B will be entitled to such performance or omission' and A can demand specific performance and B is under an obligation to comply. This and similar linkages enable construction of a structure of practical requirements.

She goes on to elaborate the point that between the two concepts of 'rights' and 'obligations' the liberal preference has been more for 'rights', that is in favour of the recipient and less for 'obligations', that is, the persons bound by a duty to act or not to act in a certain manner. O'Neill prefers an emphasis on obligations and constructs a type which is made up of universal and special 'obligations.' She classifies universal obligations into perfect and imperfect obligations. Such perfect obli-

gations are held by all, owed to all and their counterpart are 'liberty rights', embodied in legal and economic systems (e.g. right of access to public places with the corresponding obligation of one and all to desist from obstruction; 'welfare rights', that is, rights to goods and services without which human well-being will be gravely threatened with the counterpart of obligation on the part of those specified others or specified institutions charged with specific performance of the duty to provide those goods and services). Imperfect obligations are held by all but owed to none and do not have counterpart rights.

Special rights are, again divided into perfect and imperfect obligations. The former are held by some and owed to specified others with counterpart special rights created by special transactions and relationships. Imperfect special obligations are held by some and are owed to none but are embodied in the ethos of special relationships and practices. These have no counterpart rights.

From this scaffolding O'Neill proceeds to establish in chapters 6 and 7, principles of justice and virtue which can 'provide guidelines for constructing just and virtuous institutions and practices and for leading just and virtuous lives' (p. 153). She discounts 'liberty' and 'equality' as basic to justice—'liberty' for the reason that it necessarily means that each should have the largest 'equal liberty compatible with like liberty for all'. This would need a metric for liberty which would create more problems than it could solve. Liberty is, in the final analysis, a bundle of rights inhering in specific individuals and need specific legislation to make these enforceable. 'Equality' is discounted 'because equality is a radically incomplete predicate, so hospitable to countless differing completions' (p. 162). She, then, proceeds, through meticulous arguments, to formulate inclusive principles of justice and virtue. Onara O'Neill formulates rejection of injury as the obligation of justice and rejection of indifference and neglect as the obligation of virtue.

*Towards Justice and Virtue*, which is described as a constructive account of practical reasoning is a book by a plumber for other plumbers in the academic disciplines of ethics and political philosophy. As such it is a little difficult reading for the lay reader. But Onara O'Neill makes the reading somewhat easy by the comfortable diction in which she couches her findings and conclusions at different places in the book. She states at relevant places what her argument is going to be and what she has found previously.

The book, in the main, is a recapitulation of the current status of the debate regarding the theoretical superiority of universal principles of justice and the particularities of context specific virtuous conduct. Therefore the absence of a serious discussion about the substantive content of justice and virtue is understandable. The omission will however, disappoint serious students of the two disciplines. So will the absence of a discussion as to why 'obligations' should take precedence over 'rights', particularly in the developing countries where denial of access to life chances is a major social and development problem.

The concept of justice signified different things at different periods ranging from the 'Matsya Nyaya', advantage of the stronger (Sophists), security (Homer and Hobbes), commonwealth of rights and obligations related to the individual's station in life (Plato), Aristotle's 'some sort of equality', freedom (Spencer), the Marxian 'from each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs', to John Rawls's contractarian theory and other modern formulations of social justice and distributive justice. There is also the attractive principle of ancient vintage—the *Suum Cuique* (to each his due) principle. A significant omission is a well-laid out discussion of these various perceptions in relation to the preferred proposition set out in the book. However, the favoured principle of rejection of direct and indirect injury as the principle of justice and of rejection of direct and indirect indifference and neglect can be a necessary implication and consequence of *Suum Cuique*. Onara O'Neill has succeeded, in considerable measure, in keeping on the right side of both the advocates of justice and virtue who do not wish to abandon their respective briefs that the two are binary categories.

*T.C.A. Ramanuja Chari, a retired civil servant, has been a student of philosophy and a lawyer.*

#### SUBSCRIBERS PLEASE NOTE

Those whose subscriptions are due may please send in their MO/DD/Cheque immediately to ensure uninterrupted supply of the journal.

Circulation Manager  
23, Vasant Enclave  
New Delhi - 110 057



# Lessons of History

Lt. Gen. J.F.R. Jacob

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES—INDO-PAK WAR 1965

By Maj. Gen. Lachhman Singh

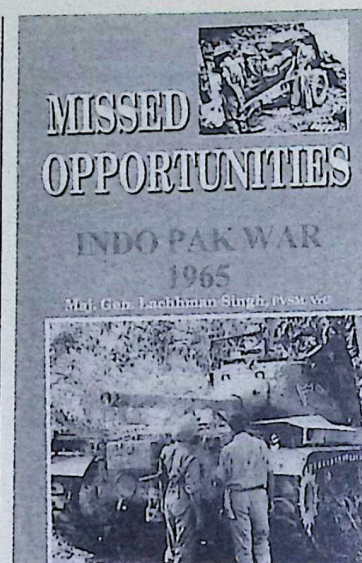
Natraj Publishers, Dehra Dun, 1997, pp. 364, Rs. 425.00

**M**aj. Gen. Lachhman Singh is a distinguished soldier who commanded a division with great competence during the 1971 liberation of Bangladesh. Lachhman Singh has written an excellent account of the 1965 Indo-Pak War. Lachhman Singh was at that time GSO I in the Military Operations Directorate at Army HQ and as such was involved in the overall direction of operations. The official history of the 1965 operations has not yet been published (the Henderson Brooks Report is yet to see the light of day). It has been edited by the various concerned ministries and will not paint an accurate picture of the actual operations. The only other publication is Maj. Gen. Joginder Singh's account in his book *Behind the Scenes*. This book gives a brief account of the events prior to August 1947 and immediately after. More relevant are the chapters on geopolitics and military geography. The chapters on the Armies of India and Pakistan and the Air Forces of the two countries cover much ground and should be of great interest to the general reader. The author comments on the Indian National Army (INA). He quotes a senior Indian officer on the subject: "Either

they or we are right. Both cannot be right. I would prefer to believe that I am right... In my opinion the oath to a soldier is like virginity to a damsel". No mention however is made of the Mutiny of the Royal Indian Navy in 1946 or of the "strike" in the Royal Indian Air Force. Today's unrest in the Indian Air Force is not unique and the action taken by F.M. Auchinleck should be studied. He describes Nehru's and Menon's approach to defence quoting Gen. Sir Rob Lockhart when he sought the government's threat assessment. Nehru told him, "we see no military threats" and later in 1951 when General Cariappa raised the question of NEFA Nehru told him "you mind only Kashmir and Pakistan". The author quotes Krishna Menon's address to Army officers in Shimla in August 1962 at which he was present "Pakistan is our only enemy. The western Powers are trying their tricks to make India and China fight. Let me tell you that China will not fight us" (this after clashes in Ladakh).

Lachhman Singh points out that both Menon and Nehru introduced a degree of politicization of the armed forces. He quotes Maj. Gen. Palit, it "was Krishna Menon who was primarily culpable for the practice of general officers establishing direct contact with politicians... Kaul had easy and direct access to Nehru... and wielded a considerable degree of unconstitutional authority." Also described is Thimayya's clash with Menon over Kaul's out of turn promotion, his resignation, Nehru's request to Thimayya to withdraw and Nehru's consequent disparaging remarks in Parliament. He touches on the enquiry ordered against Sam Manekshaw for anti-national activities. Manekshaw was eventually cleared of the charges.

In the chapter on the Indian Air Force he highlights the lack of coordination at the Chief of Staff's level. He quotes Air Chief Marshall P.C. Lall: "He (Chaudhuri), discussed the pros and cons with the Prime Minister and De-



fence Minister, the Air Chief was also informed some time later. This was done through informal meetings from which the Naval Chief was excluded... The Chief of Staff's Committee and the joint intelligence and planning staffs were completely bypassed. No contingency plans were drafted nor were the three Services asked to define the parts they would have to play... He treated the whole business as his personal affair... with the Air Force as a passive spectator and the Navy out of it altogether".

Lachhman outlines the Indian and Pakistani strategies (or perhaps lack of them) and the outline plans of both India and Pakistan. Pakistan's plan was:

- To induct guerillas into Jammu and Kashmir (OP Gibraltar)
- In the Sialkot sector to have a defensive posture with one infantry division (A newly raised armoured division was to be in reserve).
- In the Lahore sector 10 Pak infantry and 11 infantry divisions were to be deployed in a defensive role.
- Pakistan's strike force of 1 armoured and 7 infantry divisions were to capture the road railbridge at Beas and thus cut off Amritsar.
- In the Sulaimanke sector one infantry brigade was to defend their enclave covering the headworks. The area south of it was to be defended by the Desert Rangers.
- The Pakistani 12 Division was to have overall responsibility for Jammu & Kashmir.

It would be seen from the above that Pakistani capabilities and consequently their aims were limited. The overall Indian approach due to similar constraints also had limited aims. The Indian plan was:

- 11 Corps, 15 and 7 infantry division, 4 Mountain division and 2 armoured and 67 Infantry brigades were to secure the east bank of the Ichogil canal.
- 1 Corps with 1 armoured, 6 mountain, 14 infantry, 26 infantry divisions to launch an offensive towards Pasrur from the Samba Ramgarh area and secure the home bank of the Marala Ravi link canal.
- In Jammu and Kashmir 15 Corps was to eliminate guerillas and their bases across the Cease Fire Line.

The chapter on the Air Forces of India and Pakistan gives a good background to their development and later employment. He quotes Air Chief Marshal Lal on the deficiencies "in the Army-Air Force link up at virtually every level of command and control" and Maj. Gen. Joginder Singh that "Army and Air Force worked in splendid isolation." Fortunately for us the same scenario obtained on the Pakistani side.

The author describes the operations of 1965 in detail. He highlights the successful and unsuccessful offensives and battles and draws the relevant lessons from them. These detailed accounts of the campaign should be studied by the Infantry School and College of Combat and the lessons brought out by the author taken note of.

The Khem Karan battle was perhaps the most critical and decisive battle of this war. The Pakistani offensive was halted. The Commander of the Pakistani 1 artillery brigade Brigadier Shammi was killed in this battle. (This reviewer and Brigadier Shammi had served together in World War II). The Pakistanis suffered heavy losses—some 70 Patton tanks. Unfortunately we were unable to follow the retreating Pakistanis. There has been a controversy as to the apprehensions of the Chief of Army Staff during the battle of Khem Karan. According to Lt. Gen. B.M. Kaul, General Chaudhuri got cold feet while the battle of Khem Karan was still in progress and decided to take up an alternative position several miles to the rear. In this connection General Chaudhuri, then India's High Commissioner in Canada, wrote to General Kumaramangalam the Army Chief referring to Kaul's account of Chaudhuri's role during the battle of Khem Karan. Chaudhuri asked Kumaramangalam to caution Harbaksh Singh (Western Army Commander during the war) to keep mum on the subject for the good of them all. Fortunately wiser counsel and the courage of commanders in the field prevailed and we stood firm. A withdrawal would have been disastrous.

*Lachhman Singh points out that both Menon and Nehru introduced a degree of politicization of the armed forces. He quotes Maj. Gen. Palit, "it was Krishna Menon who was primarily culpable for the practice of general officers establishing direct contact with politicians."*



# The Royal Road to Bliss

Neelima Luthra

MEDITATION KNOW-HOW

By Swami Sivananda

Published by N. Ananthanarayanan by arrangement with  
The Divine Life Society, 1996, pp. 210, Rs. 100.00

**T**he Fall led to the expulsion of Adam and Eve both from a geographical as well as an inner Eden. The need to regain that immortal legacy is urgent since humans are continuing to drift away from their centre of gravity. Meditation is the royal road on which man can travel to trace the roots back to God and unleash his/her psychic Being. Meditation is the means by which the kingdom of God is discovered within the hridaya-guha (heart centre) as Atma (soul) and one can connect to one's own true self as sat-chit-ananda. Swami Sivananda explores meditation as direct experience: a hot line to God, which is not a 'reverie' or a 'hypnotic trance' but a 'solid living truth'. His book is a practical how-to primer of meditation, which insists on direct perception as the true measure of spirituality. Meditation of all kinds deals with the Manas (mind) which Sivananda calls a 'bundle of impressions, ideas and habits' and how to transcend or cause its death (manonasa). The book addresses itself to the vital questions: how to deconstruct the mind without destroying it and how to attain a positive zero point existence which is beyond the dualities of Good and Evil (in the Nietzschean sense).

The book is broadly divisible in two parts, the first deals with the practical aspects of meditation as a science based on physical, moral and mental discipline, which is initially static and is mainly mental concentration to rise above body consciousness. The second deals with actual meditation as a dynamic principle that leads to the transcendence of the mind and yoking of the jivatma with the paramatma. The emphasis on a systematic sadhana based on commonsense demystifies meditation and places it beyond the realm of the esoteric.

The subtle relationship amongst attention (jagrit), concentration (ekagra) and meditation (chetan) is analyzed. Attention is defined as the predomi-

nance of perception over sensation. Concentration is the collecting of scattered thoughts and focussing them like the laser beam on a single idea. Meditation is the constant flow of the same idea or 'svajatiya—vritti pravah.'

Both the Upanishadic goal of inner inquiry which Sivananda sums up as, 'Who am I? What is this universe or samsara? Where are we born? On what do we rest?' and Patanjali Maharishi's eightfold path (ashtang yoga) to self-realization together form the backbone of the book. Like Patanjali, Sivananda highlights the need to condition the mind through yama (mental hygiene), niyama (moral hygiene), asana (steady posture), pranayama (steadiness of the breath), and pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses). Dhyana or meditation is the sixth step, which leads to the gradual ascent on the spiritual ladder from the muladhara chakra to the sahasrara.

Sivananda gives a working knowledge about the gradual removal of depression, sloth, restlessness and attachment and how to cultivate sattvic gunas (pure virtues). Not only the fundamental problems regarding time, food, place, posture etc. which are suitable for meditation dealt with, but also psychological states like kshipta, muddha, vikshipta, ekagra and nirudha are fully explored. Exercises like tratak (steady gazing) and visualization are suggested for quick interiorization. Creative solutions sans dogmatism and rigidity are given to enable the spiritual aspirant to switch off the five sense telephones. Various pitfalls like losing the balance between spirituality and materiality, oversocialization and spiritual vampirism etc. are scientifically analyzed.

The descriptions of different types of meditations like Raj yoga, Hatha yoga, Jnana yoga, Saguna and Nirguna, Japa sahita and Japa rahit reinforce the personal nature of meditation, which varies according to the spiritual state of the aspirant. Sivananda strikes the balance between the idea of meditation as a

*Sivananda gives a working knowledge about the gradual removal of depression, sloth, restlessness and attachment and how to cultivate sattvic gunas (pure virtues). Not only the fundamental problems regarding time, food, place, posture etc. which are suitable for meditation dealt with, but also psychological states like kshipta, muddha, vikshipta, ekagra and nirudha are fully explored. Exercises like tratak (steady gazing) and visualization are suggested for quick interiorization. Creative solutions sans dogmatism and rigidity are given to enable the spiritual aspirant to switch off the five sense telephones.*

science based on external principles and the idea of meditation as an intimate encounter with the self, a gradual unfolding of the various leaves of consciousness.

There is no attempt to draw a veil over spiritual experiences, which ensue after the transcendence of the astral and the causal bodies. Without over intellectualization, the final goal of meditation, which is samadhi, is pointed out through the subtle example of a salt doll melting in the ocean. The Turiya State caused by samadhi is beyond the Freudian map of human consciousness. Sivananda depicts this very state wherein, 'the seer, sight, the image, seen, or the knower, knowable and knowledge or the subject and object become one', as the goal of meditation.

The book upholds the Vedantic tradition by focussing on kaivalya or liberation as the ultimate aim of meditation. Hence, the journey which began with the existential question, 'ko aham asmi?' or 'Who am I?' ends with the answer, 'aham brahmasmi' or 'I am that'. Meditation according to Sivananda is the only 'royal road to the attainment of salvation' and the only means to practice the spiritual truth underlined by all the religions of mankind.

*Neelima Luthra teaches English at Vivekananda College, University of Delhi.*



# Left Politics in Indian History

G.P. Sharma

THE AGRARIAN DRAMA: THE LEFTISTS AND THE RURAL POOR IN INDIA 1934-1951

By Amit Kumar Gupta

Manohar, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 516, Rs. 550.00

**T**he book under review encapsulates the most momentous period of Left politics in Indian History. Decrying attempts at negative portrayal of the Left in the national movement, the author argues for a vibrant and committed Left ceaselessly working to attain the twin goals of national independence and emancipation of the rural masses. Breaking loose from the conventional method of chapterization, the author has broadly divided the crucial years 1936-1945 into three parts. Each part, dealing with a particular phase of agrarian struggle of the rural poor, underlines the role of the Left parties.

The discussion begins with the era of the United Front which saw the coming together of the two Left parties, the CSP (Congress Socialist Party) and the CPI (Communist Party of India). Both shared a common perception in regard to peasant mobilization which was to be based on an over-arching alliance of all sections of the peasantry.

The common concern of all such like-minded people led to the formation of a third all India political forum—the AIKS (All India Kisan Sabha) with the specific task of voicing peasant grievances. Though the AIKS was dominated by the rich peasants, the author feels that it was able to represent the interests of the rural poor. This raises some doubts because ideologically and theoretically the Left may have been committed to the cause of the rural poor but in practice, unlike the 1940s, it was not able to achieve any tangible results and the reasons are not hard to seek. The peasant agitations of the 1930s, which started in the wake of economic depression, were mostly led by rich and middle peasants. The rural poor, who largely paid their rent through division of crop and received wages, generally remained unaffected. As the Left par-



ties' political campaign coincided with this tumultuous phase they could not have possibly avoided the ongoing political upheaval. Hence the Left's first liaison began with the better off section of the peasants. The imperative for building an agrarian base was so strong that both the CSP and the CPI vied with each other to win them over. The cause of these peasants could not have been ignored because of other reasons too. One, the anti-zamindari feeling, which had been continuously gathering strength, became more virulent during the time of depression because of frequent evictions for non-payment of rents. Resistance to eviction was true of all sections of the peasantry and provided a broader platform for political mobilization. The anti-zamindari stir became the main plank of the Communists in particular, because of the Comintern's stress on the removal of all vestiges of a feudal system before allowing capitalist farming to flourish

and pave the way for transition to socialism. Two, as village leaders and headmen, the dominant peasants also exercised influence over the local community. They could mould public opinion and easily garner support against the zamindars.

The need for wider mobilization, however, did not deter the Left parties from focussing upon the specific problems of the rural poor in their manifestoes. As has been rightly pointed out, the CSP in particular played a key role in radicalizing the agrarian programme by including demands such as "abolition of all form of landlordism without compensation, redistribution of land to the peasant, promotion of co-operative and collective farming by the state and transfer of all power to the producing masses". It also wanted these demands to be incorporated in the Faizpur agrarian programme of the Congress in 1936 but the latter refused to oblige. However, it was not just these demands or the concern for the problem of the peasants but their active participation in agrarian struggles that brought the CSP close to the rural folk and allowed it to infiltrate the ranks of the Bihar Kisan Sabha in good numbers in 1934-35.

The CPI on the other hand, did not show the same degree of pragmatism as the CSP, although their association with the producing masses dated back to an early period. The formation of Workers and Peasants Party (WPP), a political front of the CPI, in the early 1920s failed to create much impact on the peasants despite a radical programme of agrarian reform including land to the peasants. Its obsession with the working class movement led to the neglect of the peasants. However, the party's strategy changed in the light of the Comintern's emphasis on participation in a broader movement against imperialism as well as indigenous exploiting classes. The acceptance of United Front brought them a shade closer to reality, for no party aspiring to become a political force could afford to ignore the Indian countryside. No sooner had they joined the United Front than they began making their presence felt within the provincial Kisan Sabha as well as the All India Kisan Sabha through active participation and more sophisticated arguments regarding socialist transformation. However, the Communists were handicapped by the lack of sufficient number of cadres in the countryside.

Comparing CSP's and CPI's role during 1934-39 one can notice certain similarities. One, political compulsions did not allow the two Left parties to specifically concentrate on the problems of the rural poor. Two, both par-

ties had formal tie-up with their parent organizations. The CSP's position was more paradoxical because ideologically it did not have anything in common with the Congress except the goal of national liberation. However, it continued to nurture faith in the latter and expected to turn the organization their way through the instrumentality of Jawaharlal Nehru who was himself not able to break away from the hegemonic influence of Mahatma Gandhi. Likewise, the CPI also remained under the shadow of the Comintern for long to be able to develop an independent strategy of socialist transformation. Finally, the leaders of both political parties came from urban and semi-urban background and a good number of them happened to be labour leaders.

This brings us to an interesting discussion about the role of outsiders in rural unrests and the issue of peasant autonomy. To say that the urban leaders were the initiators of peasant protests and the rural masses were waiting to be led is to do grave injustice to the latter's cause. It may be pointed out that popular protests, in the very nature of things, had to be autonomous because of elements of local initiative and spontaneity. However with the onset of the 20th century and the broadening of the political horizon new ideological forces began competing against each other to extend their area of influence in the countryside. Under these circumstances, it was difficult for the ru-

*Dwelling upon the popular aspects of the Quit India*

*Movement, the author bemoans*

*the inability of the Left to*

*capitalize on the mass upsurge.*

*This observation seems to be a*

*little unfair because the move-*

*ment at the popular level had*

*its own logic and tended to*

*chart its own course often*

*marked by violence. Given the*

*tendency for such protests to*

*defy authority or any kind of*

*formal control, it was difficult*

*for the constitutionally orga-*

*nized political parties to extend*

*their hold over these.*



ral folk to remain in isolation even if they wanted to. At least one section of the peasantry responded quite enthusiastically because it could easily identify its interests with the new political waves. Most political parties were so seized by the response that they began targetting such peasants by only concentrating on tenancy reforms. The response of the poor and the landless was very lukewarm because their problem needed to be addressed separately. The communists did try this out during the Tebhaga and Telangana uprisings in the 1940s and with great measure of success but not without internal bickerings.

However, those Communists who were associated with these movements had to completely identify themselves with the cause of the rural poor so that they did not remain suspect in the eyes of the latter.

As we move on to the second chapter (1940-45), signs of strain begin to appear in the Left movement in general and the Communist movement in particular thus jeopardizing the existence of the United Front. Most communist breakaway groups were deeply anguished by the policy pursued by the Left within the Front as it was neither able to promote the cause of socialist revolution nor show the urgency of ousting the British from India. The CSP in particular drew more criticism because of its inability to move out of the Congress fold. The author suggests that the socialists failed to integrate the cause of social revolution with freedom struggle. This, he felt, could have been easily done by explaining to the peasants the intimate ties existing between the indigenous exploiting classes and imperialism. This would have served the dual purpose of raising the standard of both anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles.

It has been rightly pointed out that the CSP was torn between the ideas of social revolution and national independence and had deep faith in the Congress party for delivering both. Sahajanand Saraswati, a key figure in the Kisan Sabha movement, was also obsessed by a similar thought. He always lived with the hope of converting the Congress organization into a vehicle of national liberation and social transformation. However, he also made an attempt to provide a Left alternative to the Congress leadership and spared no effort to bring them together on an all India platform. But the socialists, on whose support he relied most, did not respond. At the Tripuri session of the Indian National Congress in 1939 he was completely bewildered by their conduct and openly admitted his failure in bringing together all the pro-

*Whichever way one looks at it, the fact remains that*

*Sahajanand lived with this paradox through his entire life.*

*His love for the Congress as an organization, which according to him was the only political body capable of spearheading India's struggle for independence, never waned and at the same time his faith in the Left parties in redeeming the lot of the kisans, also never ceased.*

gressive forces. He also failed to understand the sudden volte-face on the part of socialists who were the first to support Subhash Chandra Bose's candidature for Congress presidency and yet after he was elected president became his bitter critic. Sahajanand found all this so disgusting that he began moving toward communism because of the latter's greater commitment to the cause of socialist transformation. Hence, it was the issue of priorities that made Sahajanand gravitate toward the Communists. However, later the Swami also became disenchanted with them because of their continued stress on working class hegemony making him feel nostalgic about the Congress party. Thus his attempt to ensure Left solidarity could very well be taken either as an aberration or an effort to capture the Congress. Whichever way one looks at it, the fact remains that Sahajanand lived with this paradox through his entire life. His love for the Congress as an organization, which according to him was the only political body capable of spearheading India's struggle for independence, never waned and at the same time his faith in the Left parties in redeeming the lot of the kisans, also never ceased.

He thus wanted to combine the moderation of the Congress in political matters with the aggressiveness of the Kisan Sabha in social and economic spheres. His loyalties, therefore, always remained divided and he also fell victim to the same sort of allegations which he made against the socialists. The only difference was that while the socialists were organically tied to the Congress leadership, Sahajanand was emotionally hooked to the Congress organization.

Dwelling upon the popular aspects of the Quit India Movement, the author bemoans the inability of the Left to capitalize on the mass upsurge. This observation seems to be a little unfair because the movement at the popular level had its own logic and tended to chart its own course often marked by violence. Given the tendency for such protests to defy authority or any kind of formal control, it was difficult for the constitutionally organized political parties to extend their hold over these.

This could be illustrated by citing examples from the United Provinces and Bengal. In the former the CPI's official position of supporting British war efforts was not heeded by the party members who played a key role in the movement. Similarly, in the latter the Krishak Sabha of Medinipur district, like its parent organization, the AIKS, was opposed to the Quit India Movement but most of its followers were not willing to betray the general mood of the people.

As we approach the middle of the 20th century, the focus shifts to the role of CPI in the two extremely important peasant struggles, Tebhaga and Telangana (Chapter III). Here the author rightly questions Sugata Bose's argument that the Communists joined the Tebhaga movement in order to prove their credibility in the eyes of Comintern. On the contrary, we find that the Communists were into sustained work in the countryside much before the movement started. In Bengal during the famines in 1942 they carried out extensive relief work amongst the rural masses. Through their persistent attack on profiteers and hoarders they endeared themselves to the peasants. Earlier, they were engaged in mobilizing the rural poor in their fight against zamindari oppression. Ever since the formation of the Kisan Sabha in the thirties the Communists had been busy mobilizing the *bargudars* or share croppers in the north Bengal region. However, with the outbreak of the Second World War the party's strategy changed placing greater stress on imperialist war.

It is true that Communists for long had been toeing the line of the Comintern but there was always a vocal section within the party which was not willing to listen to the dictates of the central leadership. The question about reform and revolution was always intensely debated within the party. With the popular upsurge gaining momentum in the wake of government's economic policies during the Second World War it was no longer possible to avoid hard facts of economic life including soaring prices and forced grain levies. We find ample evidence to substantiate

this argument. In Andhra Pradesh under the aegis of the Andhra Maha Sabha the Communists had been fighting the vicious system of *vetti* or forced labour in Nalgonda and Warrangal since 1940. During the crucial period, between 1942 and 1945, when it is generally believed that CPI's central committee in order to help the British in its war efforts against fascism suspended the idea of class struggle, one finds the Telangana communists waging a lone battle during these years, opposing the sanction of the central leadership against the landlords through peasant mobilization (p. 305).

Differences existed not only between the central and state leaderships but also within the states between those advocating drastic measures and others asking for moderate action shorn of violence. Hence, in Bengal, during Tebhaga agitations, forcible taking away of paddy and plough cattle from the jotedar's threshing floor, breaking of the granaries, were actions not approved by the state leadership but actively endorsed by the lower rung cadres. Similarly in Andhra Pradesh during the Telangana struggle forcible seizure of land and armed counter-offensive against the *razakars* were not to the liking of top leadership of the state.

Coming to the tactical line adopted by the CPI regarding socialist transformation, it is suggested that the Communist messed up the issue by going in for wrong solutions (p. 463). This had a demoralizing effect on the peasant guerrillas of Telangana. The reason once again is attributed to the overbearing influence of the Comintern. The central leadership's stress on fighting both feudal and capitalist forms of exploitation as opposed to the Andhra Communist's emphasis on only pre-capitalist forms, led to the alienation of the rich and middle peasants which in turn weakened the Communist movement. One can only wish that the Indian Communists had taken the cue from Mao's experiences in China. His concept of agrarian reform was aimed at ending the feudal system which was represented by the landlords and old type of rich peasantry and not the liberal bourgeoisie represented by the enterprising landlords and rich peasants.

The empirical data could have done with more rigour. However, that does not take away the credit from the author of presenting a balanced and critical evaluation of the Left's role in various agrarian movements.

G.P. Sharma is Professor in the Department of History, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.



# Sexual Discipline and National Regeneration

Patricia Uberoi

SEX, CULTURE AND MODERNITY IN CHINA; MEDICAL SCIENCE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SEXUAL IDENTITIES IN THE EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIOD

By Frank Dikötter

Hurst & Company, London, 1995, pp. viii+233, £ 19.50

It was not so long ago that the cultural history of the Republican era in China (1911–1949) was little more than an explanatory backdrop to account for and contextualize first the rise, and then the ultimate triumph, of the Chinese Communist Party through a period of imperialist pressure, warlordism, anti-Japanese resistance and civil war. This truly exemplary study demonstrates that there are other, quite fascinating, tales that can be told of this period, and that they have more than local significance.

According to Dikötter, who seems to have noticed something that other social historians of the period have missed, the Republican era was a period of both political and sexual revolution. The latter was not a revolution in the sense of sexual liberation or libertinism—though that must surely have been an aspect of the life-styles of traditional and emerging elites and of the bohemian sub-cultures of artists, writers and intellectuals in the Treaty Ports and metropolises. It was a sexual

revolution in the sense that—aided by the explosion of vernacular language print culture—aspects of sexuality became a conspicuous focus of public discourse; that this discourse presented itself as a branch of modern knowledge, based in the natural sciences; and that individual sexual behaviour was linked in one way or another, explicitly or inexplicitly, with the task of nation-building. In a nutshell, as a sex education manual of the period disingenuously justified itself: 'To strengthen the country one should first strengthen the race; to strengthen the race one should first improve sex education.'

The Republican discourse on sex was not, it should be said, a coherent and integrated body of writings. On the contrary, as Dikötter observes in his Introduction, pronouncing on matters of sexuality was an activity widely dispersed through a burgeoning civil society. It involved medical doctors, the emerging pharmaceutical industries and 'quack' sex specialists; intellectuals, journalists, public figures, moralists and social reformers; demographers, sociologists, psychologists, biologists, etc. It was a public discourse addressed to a disparate readership, from the medical student to the neoliterate man in the street. And it covered a very wide range of themes: gender roles and relations; procreation and birth control; sexual health and sexually transmitted disease; eugenics and racial purity; social evils and individual perversions; normal sexual response and psychosexual pathologies; the vulnerability and responsibilities of youth; and so on.

Several of these different themes and disparate bodies of writing have been individually addressed in various studies, many of them, in recent years, inspired by a feminist agenda. But their

Dikötter presents a quite extraordinary range of materials, from ponderous medical textbooks to popular self-help manuals, from serious scholarly writings to ephemera and trivia: the prim and pornographic, the weird and wonderful, the mundane and unremarkable. His bibliography lists some 350 primary sources in Chinese, and a couple of hundred secondary writings in other languages. One had simply no idea that such materials, particularly the ephemera, had survived the ravages of war and civil war, of political and cultural revolution.

constitution as a coherent object of study greater than the sum of its separate parts is a methodological strategy with a rather different objective; namely, to outline what one might call (from within a different disciplinary tradition) the 'collective consciousness' of the era on questions of human sexuality.

To this end Dikötter presents a quite extraordinary range of materials, from ponderous medical textbooks to popular self-help manuals, from serious scholarly writings to ephemera and trivia: the prim and pornographic, the weird and wonderful, the mundane and unremarkable. His bibliography lists some 350 primary sources in Chinese, and a couple of hundred secondary writings in other languages. One had simply no idea that such materials, particularly the ephemera, had survived the ravages of war and civil war, of political and cultural revolution. (And one also wonders, parenthetically, whether any comparable cultural history could be written of South Asian sexualities, given the fact of linguistic fragmentation on the one hand, and very different attitudes to archive-keeping on the other.)

Fortunately for the reader, Dikötter wears all this learning very lightly indeed. Again fortunately for the reader, he seems almost naively content to be intelligible, despite operating within a Foucauldian framework. The result is a readable and workmanlike presentation of Chinese modernizing discourses on sexuality arranged under the five general themes of gender roles, sex and procreation, population control, sexually transmitted diseases, and 'youth' as a site of sexual anxiety—a chapter each. A brief introduction contextualises the study theoretically and methodologically, and with reference to the political history and cultural con-

tours of the Republican period in China, while a neat Epilogue wraps it all up in the light of subsequent developments in the People's Republic. There is also a sprinkling of exotic (not to say 'kinky') illustrations from some of the texts he is examining: indeed, something for all tastes.

Dikötter believes that the essentializing categories of 'eastern' and 'western', 'traditional' and 'modern' that comprise the usual toolkit for interpreting the cultural history of modern China are inadequate for capturing the complexities of continuity and change, localism and globalism, in modern discourses on sex. China's 'traditional' culture was not unitary and unchanging, but plural and ever-evolving; supposedly 'modern' ideas were anticipated in intellectual developments in the late imperial period; 'western' ideas were very selectively appropriated; and the field of sexuality, as it was finally constituted as a body of modern knowledge, was not uniform and hegemonic but riven with ambiguity and contradiction.

For instance, gender hierarchy and the complementarity of male and female were foundational principles of Confucian cosmology and social thought, which modelled human social relations on the hierarchical complementarity of Heaven and Earth. Rejecting the Confucian scheme of things, an increasing number of people sought to ground and justify their understanding of gender roles and relations in the newly discovered 'truths' of modern science. Thus, the principle of the complementarity and inequality of the sexes was no longer supported by Confucian metaphysics but by the science of human biology, which had documented the different physical endowments of male and female bodies, which

*The Republican discourse on sex was not, it should be said, a coherent and integrated body of writings. On the contrary, as Dikötter observes in his Introduction, pronouncing on matters of sexuality was an activity widely dispersed through a burgeoning civil society.*



In its insistent valorization of individual self-control, the modern Chinese discussion of sexuality appears to have been peculiarly inflected by the specificities of Chinese culture even as it participated in a global discourse and drew on the ecumenical authority of modern science.

connected these physiological differences with psychological differences and predispositions, and which generalized to social relations at large the attributes of male 'activity' and female 'passivity' exemplified in the 'natural' activity of sexual intercourse. Similarly, appeal to modern science naturalized virginity as a condition of physical and moral purity, identified the conjugal relation as the proper site of satisfying sexual activity, and validated motherhood as woman's biological and social destiny.

The intersection of nationalism and sexuality is most conspicuous in debates on the themes of 'race' and of 'population'. The Republican period saw the introduction and popularization of the new sciences of Eugenics and Demography, although, as Dikötter shows, similar ideas had begun to emerge in the writings of the late imperial period.

Eugenic theories never received institutional support in Republican China, but they were widely dispersed through society and certainly laid the ground for current thinking and legislation in the PRC. Similarly, while there was no active government support for birth control (indeed, official Guomindang policy considered China's huge population an important national resource), support for measures of population limitation was widespread among educated classes, tempered only by the fear that the overall quality of the Chinese race would deteriorate if educated the lesser orders bred without restraint. Notwithstanding such fundamental dictory opinions, however, the contradictory opinions on the necessity for birth control shared the common presumption that procreational activity belonged not merely to the private do-

main of conjugal relations, but was a crucial concern of the state.

The Republican period also saw the rise of a prolific and passionate discourse on sexual disease, linked to national survival and well-being. Venereal diseases were both an epidemiological reality in China at that time and, symbolically, an index of China's weakness in the face of imperialist aggression. 'Cultural representations of syphilis gave expression to the idea that China had been colonized by the dual force of foreign capital and fatal disease. Imperialists "violated" the country's territorial integrity, and germs "encroached" upon the urethra' (p. 130). There are interesting parallels in the current anxiety about China's 'spiritual' and physical pollution by new mores and diseases from the West.

The chief agent of the cancer of venereal disease infecting the body of Chinese society was the figure of the prostitute, whose clients then transmitted the disease to their innocent wives and children. Social reformers addressed themselves to eliminating the 'social evil' of prostitution for the good of the family and the nation, while social scientists reflected self-importantly on the genetic, psychological and environmental factors that predisposed certain women to this criminal expression of sexual deviance. The non-domestic and non-procreative practice of homosexuality was similarly stigmatized.

The Republican discourse on sex also witnessed the creation of a category of 'youth'. Adolescence was now recognized as a critical and vulnerable stage in the individual life-cycle, whose particular pathology was the wasteful and debilitating expenditure of energy in night emissions and masturbation—a loss as much to the nation as to the individual. As the sociologist Yi Jiayue put it, arguing for an anti-masturbation movement among youth: 'To predict the rise or fall of the nation one should look at the physique of the race; to assess the future of the state, it is enough to examine the bedclothes of our youth' (p. 165).

Successful passage through the physical, psychological and moral vicissitudes of adolescence was thought to be dependent both on the vigilant exercise of social control, and the development of self-discipline among youth. Indeed, the theme of self-control was a running thread through the Republican discourse on sexuality, simultaneously with the demand for enhanced social control and stern state intervention to improve the sexual health of the nation and rid it of sexual disorder and deviance.

In its insistent valorization of indi-

vidual self-control, the modern Chinese discussion of sexuality appears to have been peculiarly inflected by the specificities of Chinese culture even as it participated in a global discourse and drew on the ecumenical authority of modern science. In *The Birth of the Prison*, Michel Foucault had proposed that the essence of modernity lay in the imposition of 'discipline' over 'docile' human bodies, in contrast to the self-disciplinary and ascetic bodily regimes of medievalism. Modern discourses of the body in China, on the contrary, seemed to have laid great emphasis on self-discipline, even as they simultaneously endorsed state intervention. Again according to Foucault, the constitution of a modern domain of 'sexuality' endorsed the possibility of plural sexualities and sexual preferences, and severed sex-as-pleasure from sex-as-procreation. In modern China, the selective appropriation of scientific knowledge legitimated only heterogenital sex within the conjugal relation. The link between procreation and sexuality was reinscribed, and the pursuit of sex as pleasure stigmatized—all in the larger cause of social hygiene, racial improvement and effective nation-building.

The Republican discourse on sexuality was a product of civil society, but it prepared the ground, cognitively speaking, for the institution of PRC policies to monitor and control the sexual practices of the Chinese people—state-sponsored birth control, eugenic planning, the criminalization of sexual deviance, etc. At the same time, the severing of procreation from sex through the energetic propagation of birth control has dangerously opened the way to a legitimation of varieties of marital and extramarital sexual pleasure, despite continued moral exhortation in favour of adolescent self-restraint and conjugal fidelity. As China

*The chief agent of the cancer of venereal disease infecting the body of Chinese society was the figure of the prostitute, whose clients then transmitted the disease to their innocent wives and children. Social reformers addressed themselves to eliminating the 'social evil' of prostitution for the good of the family and the nation.*

globalizes once again, as western values and life-styles captivate a new generation of Chinese youth, as AIDS replaces venereal disease as the stigmatized index of individual sexual indulgence and collective promiscuity, one is witness once again to a mounting public anxiety that China's 'spiritual culture' is about to succumb to the temptations of adulterous sexuality and the depravities of westernized modernity. It seems that China is all set, now, for another sexual revolution.

\* \* \*

As will be clear from this summary account, *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China* (like Dikötter's earlier and companion study, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* [Hurst, 1992]) provides much useful and fascinating material for the revision of received theories of sexual modernity, and for the comparative study of sexualities as well. Indian readers, especially, will find much that resonates in this material, particularly the emphasis on individual sexual self-discipline connected with national regeneration.

Rather sad, then, to reflect that among the many hundreds of references to primary and secondary writings on modern sexualities, there is perhaps only a single nod to South Asian materials—significantly, reference to the ubiquitous belief in the debilitating effects of semen loss, deployed as a reminder that such anxieties are current in many different cultures and historical eras.

One could take a bet that Indian (or Indianist) writings on modern sexualities are similarly insouciant of the Chinese experience. We, too, tend to look only to the West—and back again.

Patricia Uberoi is Reader in Social Change and Development at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi, and Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi. She has edited *Family Kinship and Marriage in India*, (Oxford University Press, 1993), and *Social Reform, Sexuality and the State* (Sage Publications, 1996).

#### ATTENTION READERS

TBR Book Club is off to a flying start. Please ensure that each order is accompanied by the coupon from the TBR and cheque/M.O./draft for the requisite amount. Incomplete orders cannot be processed.



# Giving Voice to the Marginalized

Jasjit Purewal

RESEARCHING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN—METHODOLOGICAL AND PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by Martin D. Schwartz

Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 222, \$19.95 (paperback)

Now and again a book appears which rekindles faith in scholarship and much more. Scholarship, which has the promise to feed groups loosely, clubbed as activists; social scientists and others involved in the thankless task of social change. Especially so when research on such issues continues to hover on the fringes of academia, beleaguered by ongoing debates on the 'respectability' of social research methodologies. Imagine when feminist issues get edited with such insight and that too on discomfiting issues of sexual violence. Martin D. Schwartz begins his preface by contextualizing the status quo—"we have witnessed two countervailing trends in research on rape, sexual harassment and other violence against women. First there was an enormous backlash movement throughout North America, with many men and a few women arguing that feminists have greatly exaggerated the problem. Much of the attack obscured the major issues in favour of petty complaints about the nature of scholarly research design. On the other hand the research and data has been increasing dramatically."

It is timely therefore to voice reassurance when a male scholar edits a book on researching sexual violence where the science is as thorough as the

*It is in fact symptomatic of women's evolution in the past decade that the shell of secrecy around sexual appropriation of their bodies has been torn and which is now driving the issue onto the table if not at the centrestage of women's rights.*

integrity with which the issues have been framed and addressed. I cannot even begin to overstate the reaffirmation that men writing on women can inspire. Especially when the subject is sexual not in term of sexuality (since many men have written tomes on their versions of female sexuality) but the ugly reality of sexual violence and its many faces. In doing so Schwartz has given a wholesome format to the debate by raising issues of backlash against research, incorporating the integral facet of emotions in researching this issue and finally issues of methodology, ethics, measurement scales and the hybrid problems of sample diversities in race, colour and cultural experiences.

Anyone working on the issues of sexual violence knows only too well that it has been an uphill track to carve a place for sexual violence on the agenda, distinct from generic issues of violence against women. Since intimate relationships, familial bonds and the whole nature of sexuality is where the violence is most often played out religion, culture and society has riddled the effort with complexities. It is in fact symptomatic of women's evolution in the past decade that the shell of secrecy around sexual appropriation of their bodies has been torn and which is now driving the issue onto the table if not at the centrestage of women's rights. It is also perhaps, the albeit begrudging, social acknowledgement that sexual abuse is a more pervasive and crippling truth in women's lives than what is convenient to believe.

"Why do we keep finding large numbers of victimized women, even in the face of a national media blitz arguing that these women could not possibly exist?" Koss and Hobart Cleveland, a professor and Ph.D. student explain in their chapter on date rape that it exists mainly because society does not censure it and in fact may encourage it. They provide one of the better summaries

on current data available on date rape. By using longitudinal research they provide a new methodological tool which by using multiple measures over a long period neutralizes attacks that any one single question can confuse the respondent to change the direction of findings. DeKeseredy, sociology professor at Carleton University, in Chapter 3 uses a national sample survey of college and university men and women to find widespread victimization of women in college campuses and his findings were challenged by the media which resulted in hate mail and threats.

In a unique study Christine Mattley of Ohio University argues that part of the continuum of sexual violence is the "pornography industry" which includes "telephone fantasy workers." In a path-breaking methodological innovation she got employed by a telephone sex service and took almost 2000 calls from clients. In the book she focuses on the emotions of the researcher. Her response to being stigmatized by her academic community, trivialized and made the butt of insults and jokes because she chose to work through a deviant group. "Meanwhile I was wrestling with my own feelings of alienation. I was having a tough time traversing two lives and never fitting in any place" she says of her emotions around the methodological choice she made. Jennifer Huff in her chapter raises the occupational hazards of her work. She was being sexually harassed by her research subjects which led to immense pressure through self-blame, worry and uncertainty about whether she should continue or abandon her project.

Susan Hippensteele looks at power, privilege and institutional change by recording how difficult it is to isolate racism from sexism and homophobia. A leader in the study of ethnoscience she analyses the problem of simultaneously being both a committed activist and a careful research scientist. Another trendsetter, Claire Renzetti rose to fame with her best-known feminist participatory research in the U.S. on lesbian battery. Here she examines the advantages of her research method over standard positivist research for studying violence against women. The question of the gender of researchers on this very sensitive issue is raised by Dawn Currie and Brian Maclean, two of Canada's best known criminological researchers, assessing this question empirically conclude that training is more important than the gender of the researcher. This fact itself can revolutionize the resource base available for such research even as it cements the gender divide on a very fundamental and constructive point.

*The book is one of the most refreshing yet erudite and comprehensive efforts on compiling research on sexual violence. It takes care to raise social bias and attitudes which actually fashion the victims perception of her experience.*

Finally race and culture and the eternal problem of minorities being pushed to the fringe is taken up by Kimberley Husiman who raises the paradox that even as non-white researchers are the ones who are more often interested (especially in numbers) to take up non-white women's research how does that restrict their ability to get efficacious data. She acknowledges the barriers and complexities but underscores the importance of using this approach; "to increase global awareness and overcome cross-cultural barriers."

The book is one of the most refreshing yet erudite and comprehensive efforts on compiling research on sexual violence. It takes care to raise social bias and attitudes which actually fashion the victims perception of her experience. Martin Schwartz and Victoria Pitts underline in their chapter on "Self Blame in Hidden Rape Crisis" that; "although all of their samples was given love and support, the ones who were told that it was not their fault were the ones who reported the crime." For us in India the debate is still obfuscated by many of these issues and more. It would not be wrong to say that we are just beginning to call rape by its real and varied names. This book helps in illuminating the path yet to be tread but is also a heartening reaffirmation. On the on-going debate of the merits of feminist research Renzetti sums up eloquently for the merit of this research "to give voice to and improve life conditions of the marginalised even as it transforms social scientific inquiry from an academic exercise into an instrument of meaningful social change."

Jasjit Purewal, Director of Sakshi is an NGO working on violence against women with a special focus on sexual violence, was a journalist with the Indian Express for many years and is the author of Against Myself, a translation of short stories by Rajeev Seth.



# TBR Book Club

Join today and discover how you can avail of fantastic discounts on titles from Disha, Kali for Women, Katha, Ravi Dayal, Tara, Tulika, and many more. . .

## HERE'S HOW YOU BENEFIT

- No membership fee. New titles will be on offer regularly. Get your copy of *The Book Review* from your nearest dealer or write to the address below. All you have to do is tick the titles in the box provided, fill the coupon and mail the sheet with your payment.
- Get 20% discount on all titles on offer
- Select from seven new titles at a special price
- One year subscription to *The Book Review* at 10% discount
- Special Inaugural offer (valid upto 31 March) on orders of Rs 1000 and above. Get the attractive Tulika Diary (*Celebrate India 1998*) at a special price. (Original Price Rs 165, You Pay Rs 125)
- No extra charges for packaging and postage
- Please note: All prices given in bold type are the special CLUB prices for TBR Book Club members

## Books on SPECIAL Offer

|                                                                                                              |                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>God of Small Things</i> by Arundhati Roy (India Ink)                             | Rs 295                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Harvest</i> by Manjula Padmanabhan (Kali for Women)                              | Rs 120                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Katha Prize Stories Vol. 7</i> (Katha)                                           | Rs 188 (hb) Rs 131 (pb) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Contemporary Art in Baroda</i><br>edited by Gulammohammed Sheikh (Tulika, Delhi) | Rs 1685                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Under the Banyan Tree</i> (set of 4 books) (Tulika, Madras)                      | Rs 180                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Story of a Panther</i> by Mickey Patel (Ravi Dayal Publisher)                    | Rs 120                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Landscapes</i> edited by Gita Wolf, illus. by children (Tara)                    | Rs 109                  |

## TITLES ON OFFER

### RAVI DAYAL PUBLISHER

|                                                                                             | List price | Club price |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Beethoven among the Cows</i> by Rukun Advani                    | Rs 125     | Rs 100     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tara Lane</i> by Shama Futehally                                | Rs 90      | Rs 72      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In an Antique Land</i> by Amitav Ghosh                          | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> by Amitav Ghosh                     | Rs 190     | Rs 152     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Looking Through Glass</i> by Mukul Keshavan                     | Rs 190     | Rs 152     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tale Danda</i> by Girish Karnad                                 | Rs 80      | Rs 64      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Anjolie Ela Menon Paintings in Private Collections</i> by Murti | Rs 1900    | Rs 1520    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Woman of Basrur</i> by Shivarama Karanth                    | Rs 140     | Rs 112     |

### TULIKA, Madras

|                                                                                                                                                                                         | List price | Club price |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ka Se Kapde Kaise?</i> (Hindi Alphabet Book) written & illustrated by Bindia Thapar                                                                         | Rs 135     | Rs 108     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Eeki Dokki</i> written by Sandhya Rao illustrated by Ranjan De                                                                                              | Rs 65      | Rs 52      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Eecha Poocha</i> written by Kala Sasikumar, illustrated by Ashok Rajagopalan                                                                                | Rs 65      | Rs 52      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sorry, Best Friend!</i> edited by Githa Hariharan & Shama Futehally                                                                                         | Rs 30      | Rs 24      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Read and Colour Series</i> (set of 4 books): The Story of Tipu Sultan, The Story of Rani of Jhansi, The Story of Dandi March, The Story of 15th August 1947 | Rs 160     | Rs 128     |

### TULIKA, Delhi

|                                                                                          | List price | Club price |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essays in Indian History</i> by Irfan Habib                  | Rs 195     | Rs 156     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Whatever Happened to Imperialism</i> by Prabhat Patnaik      | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lineages of the Present: Political Essays</i> by Aijaz Ahmad | Rs 550     | Rs 440     |

### KALI FOR WOMEN

|                                                                                                                                                              | List price | Club price |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Stages: The Art and Adventures of Zohra Segal</i> by Joan Erdman with Zohra Segal                                                | Rs 300     | Rs 240     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>A Revolutionary Life: Memoirs of a Political Activist</i> by Lakshmi Sahgal                                                      | Rs 250     | Rs 200     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>A Partial Woman: A novel</i> by Mina Singh                                                                                       | Rs 170     | Rs 136     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Anger of Aubergines: stories of women and food</i> by Bulbul Sharma                                                          | Rs 130     | Rs 104     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Relationship: Extracts from a Correspondence</i> by Nayantra Sahgal and E.N. Mangat Rai                                          | Rs 225     | Rs 180     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Representing the Body: Gender issues in Indian art</i> edited by Vidya Dehejia                                                   | Rs 230     | Rs 184     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Crooked Line</i> by Ismat Chughtai                                                                                           | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In Other Words: new writing by Indian women</i> edited by Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon                                         | Rs 120     | Rs 96      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Slate of Life: an anthology of stories by Indian women</i>                                                                   | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Inner Spaces: new writing by women from Kerala</i> edited by Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon                                      | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Heart Breaks Free and The Wild One</i> by Ismat Chughtai                                                                     | Rs 80      | Rs 64      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The History of Doing: an illustrated account of movements for women's rights and feminism in India, 1800-1990</i> by Radha Kumar | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Quilt and Other Stories</i> by Ismat Chughtai                                                                                | Rs 100     | Rs 80      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Touch Me, Touch-Me-Not: Women, Plants and Healing</i> by Shodhini                                                                | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |

### KATHA

|                                                                                                 | List price | Club price |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Short Story Collections:                                                                        | hb/pb      | hb/pb      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Katha Prize Stories Vol 1-3</i>                                     | Rs 250/120 | 220/96     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Katha Prize Stories Vols 4&amp;6</i>                                | Rs 250/150 | 220/120    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>A Southern Harvest</i>                                              | Rs 250/125 | 220/100    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Visions-Revisions</i>                                               | Rs —/120   | —/96       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>A Unique Odyssey</i>                                                | Rs 250/120 | 220/96     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Masti</i>                                                           | Rs 200/—   | 160/—      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mauni</i>                                                           | Rs 250/—   | 220/—      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Vaikom Muhammad Basheer</i>                                         | Rs 200/—   | 160/—      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Yuva Katha Vol I to VIII</i>                                        | Rs —/30    | —/24       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Stree Katha</i> (Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi) | Rs —/90    | —/72       |

### TARA

|                                                                                                        | List price | Club price |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mahabharata I and II</i> written and illustrated by Samhita Arni           | Rs 300     | Rs 240     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Hungry Lion</i> adapted by Gita Wolf illustrated by Indrapramit Roy        | Rs 165     | Rs 132     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tiger on a Tree</i> written by Anushka Shankar illustrated by Pulak Biswas | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Child Art</i> written by Tarit Bhattacharjee illustrated by children       | Rs 175     | Rs 140     |

### DISHA

|                                                                                                | List price | Club price |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Green Gardener</i> by Jayanta Mahapatra                        | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Malabar Muslim Cookery</i> by Umi Abdulla                          | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Eighteenth Parallel</i> by Ashokamitran                        | Rs 90      | Rs 72      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goenab by Coolie Doctor</i>                                        | Rs 90      | Rs 72      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Disha Guides—Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Madras</i> (four-in-one) | Rs 145     | Rs 120     |

## TBR Book Club

23 Vasant Enclave

New Delhi 110 057

Tel + Fax: 91-124-355500

Tel: 6142031, 6144805

- ☐ YES I would like to become a member of TBR Book Club  
☐ YES I would like to subscribe to The Book Review

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of titles ordered \_\_\_\_\_ (Tick in the boxes provided)

Amount remitted \_\_\_\_\_

DD/money order/Cheque no. \_\_\_\_\_

Please allow 30 days for processing order (45 days in case of payment by cheque). In Public Domain. Gurukul Kangri Collection, Haridwar





Clarion 4F0E37

## The only larger fleet flying Indian skies.

Unfortunately, they won't take you to where you'd like to touch down. But Indian Airlines can, thanks to its jet fleet comprising 10 Airbus A300's, 30 Airbus A320's and 12 B-737's linking 55 destinations in India and 17 overseas. And with 37,000 seats on 220 flights every day. All brought to you by a truly impressive infrastructure manned by our experienced and professional workforce of 22,000.

Come home to  इंडियन एयरलाइन्स  
Indian Airlines



# Mirroring An Epoch

Margrit Pernau-Reifeld

ENSLAVED DAUGHTERS: COLONIALISM, LAW AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

By Sudhir Chandra

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998, pp. xi+249, Rs. 495.00

Sometimes it may happen that the world is reflected in a drop of water. Sometimes, it may happen that a small, at the first sight perhaps even trivial event reflects a whole epoch, the forces at work, the mentalities, their inherent contradictions and ambiguities. If such an event finds a historian who treats the details with loving care without ever losing sight of the bigger issues involved, the reader may indeed consider himself lucky.

The facts Sudhir Chandra presents in his new book are simple enough. Rukhmabai, a young woman of twenty-two years refuses to live with her husband. A child-bride at the age of eleven, she nevertheless remained with her mother and stepfather and was allowed to continue her education, which she did assiduously. Her husband, Dadaji, in the meanwhile went from bad to worse, refusing to get educated and to work and leading a dissipated life under the aegis of his uncle. When he finally claimed his bride, she refused to come and found support for her decision with her family. Social pressure having failed, in 1884 Dadaji filed a case for reconstitution of conjugal rights.

If there was anything exceptional in this case, it surely was the personality of Rukhmabai, the strength of character with which she faced the battle not

only against her in-laws, but soon against the whole of the print media of Hindu orthodoxy as well. From the beginning she conceived her fight not only as for a personal cause—refusing to surrender to the embraces of a despised husband—but for the improvement of the lot of her Hindu sisters, whom she wanted to free from too early marriage performed without their consent. Once this fight had become public, she too received ample support from the liberal press, both in England and in India. So ample in fact was the support both Rukhmabai and Dadaji got from the opposing camps that they began to matter more as symbols, than as persons with a life of their own.

The process was lost in the first instance, the judge refusing to extend the applicability of the English law for "restitution" to cover an "institution" of conjugal rights as well. This decision however was reversed by the Bombay High Court, who ordered Rukhmabai to go "back" to the husband with whom she never had lived, or else to face imprisonment. Satyagrahi before the term was coined, she said she would rather take any punishment an unjust law might inflict upon her than to submit.

A seemingly private quarrel had become a political issue. Why was that so? Why did the passions rise so high on both sides in what were apparently



only fine judicial points—whether the English law for restitution of conjugal rights covered the institution as well, and whether or not this law was applicable in the Indian context. Sudhir Chandra painstakingly sifts a vast amount of material, files of the judiciary, the media and the government. With the acumen of a scholar trained in analysing literary sources, he not only appreciates the judicial argumentation, but the process of thought, the mentalities which normally remain hidden behind the discussion of formal points.

Firstly: The differentiation between the restitution and the institution of conjugal rights, which came quite naturally to common feeling—that there should be a difference between a virgin bride refusing to consummate a marriage and an adult woman who had lived with her husband for several years—nevertheless raised thorny issues. Was sexual contact necessary for the legal validity of a Hindu marriage? If the marriage was considered complete only after consummation, what would be the consequence for the alimentation of the child widows? If moreover, like Rukhmabai and her supporters argued, consent was essential for Hindu marriage, the legality of most of the marriages would become open to doubt. Perhaps one should remember that it was far less, the simple requirement of registration for marriages, that provoked one of Gandhi's first satyagrahas in South Africa to gauge the intensity of popular feeling which might be raised on such an issue.

Secondly: What rights flow from a valid marriage? The English law viewed marriage as a contract in the fulfilment of which both partners acquired a legal

right. Marriage according to Hindu law, however, was nearer to the sacrament than to the contract. Did this give the partners more or less rights? Which were these rights?

Thirdly: What was the nature of these rights, who was called upon to enforce them and by what means?

Traditionally, judgements in these cases seem to have pertained to the domain of the panchayat, who evaluated the facts and backed its sentence by spiritual pressure, such as sending a reluctant wife to hell after death or condemning her to be a worm for the next 10,000 years (p. 87 and p. 91). Nevertheless, a panchayat could certainly also order a social boycott—if it also sometimes delivered the wife bodily to her husband, remains ambiguous in Sudhir Chandra's exposition (p. 161).

However, the British had arrived by the 1880s and were quite decided that their government should include the administration of justice as well, even if they highly advertise the fact, that it was the colonial people's own personal law they applied. Where the English law, applied in its full, would have annulled Rukhmabai's marriage because of lack of consent; where the Hindu law could have proved more flexible and certainly did not provide for imprisonment, the administration of Hindu law by a British Court according to the English Civil Procedure Code decidedly gave her the worst of both systems.



tive section of society. At the same time, as Thomas Metcalf has shown, the "creation of a difference"<sup>1</sup> permitted the colonial power at once to legitimate their rule by their supposed cultural superiority—not least shown by the way they treated women—and to uphold an orientalism contrary to all their proclaimed principles, but which was presumed to be what the ruled wanted and what fitted them best. This orientalism as well as the codified Anglo-Hindu Law were not, as upheld by the rulers, coming down from times immemorial, unchangeable and anchored in the Indian soul, but were a common creation of the British and a certain section of the Indian society, defined as representative by the colonial power. While quite willing to enact and change laws even in the face of considerable Indian resistance, if deemed necessary in the imperial interest, the British chose to make the position of women at the same time an example of how "their democratic ethos obliged them to tolerate the native law" (p. 132) and of how much better they would have liked to treat them, had they not been bound by, as they called it, native superstition.

In a final anti-climax, a financial agreement was reached outside the court, which left Dadaji free to remarry and Rukhmabai to pursue her study of medicine in England and afterwards to practice as a lady-doctor in Surat. The odium of having to force a young English-educated woman to prison being herewith removed from the colonial bureaucracy, the attempts of solving the judicial impasse by a very moderate legislative reform came to nought. The laws concerning the restitution of conjugal rights have been abolished in Great Britain only in the 1970s, in India they were confirmed by an interpretation of the Supreme Court in 1984 (p. 172 and 208).

Not every drop of water reflects the whole world. Sudhir Chandra's great merit lies both in having selected the right drop and in presenting it to the reader in such a way that he is brought to see the reflection and to reflect for himself.

<sup>1</sup> Metcalf, Thomas R. *Ideologies of the Raj* (The New Cambridge History of India, III. 4), Cambridge 1995.

*Margrit Pernau-Reifeld has a doctorate from the South Asia Institute in Heidelberg on constitutional change and political culture in the princely state of Hyderabad in the 20th century. She is currently working on the Muslim community in Old Delhi in the 19th and 20th centuries.*

## A Chronological Survey

Sarvar V. Sherry Chand

FEMINISM: THEORY, CRITICISM, ANALYSIS

By Sushila Singh

Pencraft International, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 192, Rs. 300.00

The announcements on the last few pages of the present volume would appear to indicate that Pencraft International have gone in for theory in a big way. Sushila Singh's book, *Feminism: Theory, Criticism, Analysis*, however, is a disappointing first taste of this enterprise—at least for the present reviewer.

The title of the book—rather, the sub-title—raises certain expectations which appear to receive some confirmation in the Preface, despite the somewhat imprecise phrasing of the sentence: "The book is organized around three approaches towards understanding feminism—theoretical tenets, literary criticism and applications." (Are these 'approaches'? one is inclined to ask. Is 'feminism' a discipline? What is being applied to what? Is feminism, then, a formula by which one solves problems—or reads texts?) Even so, one senses that the aim of the exercise may be to explore varieties of feminist theory with a view to explaining how these lead to various critical perspectives which are then illustrated with readings of particular texts. However, the next sentence should serve as a warning against any expectation of coherence or logical development of argument, let alone originality of conceptualization. "The chapters," we are told, "are based on previously published articles, invited lectures and updated conference presentations." This does appear to explain implicitly—but does it justify?—several instances of wholesale repetition, little or no rationale for the subject matter included, no logical development in the ordering of chapters, no reason for the selection of specific texts by specific writers. The second and third pages of the Preface (unnumbered) seem to assume that they are offering an explanation. But, in fact, being told that the "essentialist/constructionist debate has led to some of the greatest insights of the feminist theory" or that the chapter on "women's place in academia [in America from 1860 to 1900] discusses how women rejected conventional

claims of female distinctiveness" or that "male writers like Norman Mailer exemplify marked misogyny" doesn't get the reader very far. What we have is a pretext for lumping together a heterogeneous collection of essays that also includes a summarized interview (the chapter on Margaret Drabble). It is not the heterogeneity of the pieces *per se* that is the problem, but the blithe assertion that they do in fact make a coherently argued book.

The mode in which the essays are written is predominantly survey (very often chronological survey) of available material interspersed with trite commentary revealing little insight or analysis.

Chapters 1 to 4 seem to cover what the subtitle calls 'theory' offering an elementary text-book account of the women's movement in the West, outlining certain themes and debates among feminist theorists. Chapter 3 draws somewhat unwelcome attention to itself on two counts. Pages 50–51 on Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are a verbatim repetition of chunks of Chapter 1. The two chapters could either have been clubbed together or had cross-referencing. Substantial use of the latter might have made the book a little neater. A more serious problem arises on pages 48–49 with Sushila Singh's account of Toril Moi's account of Hélène Cixous. Although the debt to Toril Moi is acknowledged and two sentences are placed within quotation marks, the rest is lifted from pages 121–122 of Moi's original (*Sexual/Textual Politics*, London, Methuen, 1988) almost *in toto* with a few words transposed, a few turns of phrase altered, or a few lines omitted. What is more, we are hard put to it to work out how this chunk relates to what goes before it or to what comes after. This may explain glaring dissonances of style which sometimes flows fluently but is often also muddled and ungrammatical especially in the use of articles.

Chapters 5 and 6 relate, similarly, to what the subtitle calls 'criticism'.

### FEMINISM THEORY, CRITICISM, ANALYSIS



SUSHILA SINGH

Chapter 7 on women's place in American academia in the second half of the 19th century seems to have no *raison d'être* at all. Chapter 8 on Elizabeth Cady Stanton seems to have been overlooked even by the chapter outline in the Preface. Having looked at this chapter however, not to mention the twice-repeated attempted account of the nineteenth century women's rights movement, one is struck by the complete absence of any reference to or awareness of the chequered and extremely ambiguous relationship between the American women's rights movement and the contemporary abolitionist movement. Similarly, the book nowhere takes account of the links between patriarchal structures of oppression and other kinds of oppressive structures. We are left with a self-exculpatory gesture in the Preface: "This does not at all mean that feminism is race-neutral or class-neutral."

The ninth chapter is called 'The Frontier in American History and Masculinity'. This chapter, we are told in the Preface, offers a "consideration of the concept of masculinity" which "seems essential for a fuller understanding of the feminist philosophy". Unfortunately, the chapter is unable to tell us how or why. It boils down to a fairly trite assertion of the mutually reinforcing relationship between the American frontier experience and masculinist stereotypes which, we are told, ultimately resulted in the masculinist nature of the American Dream. Although the chapter is also peppered with quotes from and comments about masculinity in the Hindu Shastras (we fail to understand why the only males who appear to have had anything to do with the frontier experi-



ence are white—possibly because Sushila Singh has not come across books written on the subject which may have included other groups like the American Indians, for instance. One wonders what has become of their version of the “frontier” experience or “masculinity”. Not that this seems to worry the author much.

Strangely enough, chapter 14 which seems to be a female counterpart of this one is not only located five chapters away, but is explicitly concerned with the ‘frontier’ experience of the women of a variety of ethnic groups—possibly because, this time, Sushila Singh’s sources on the subject have been concerned with cultural plurality. This discrepancy between the two chapters, however, does not appear to have occurred to the author.

Sandwiched between these two chapters are the “applications”—chapters on Mailer, Margaret Drabble, Joyce Carol Oates and Margaret Atwood—all essentially in the images-of-women mode and largely devoted to retellings of the novels concerned, including repetitions in the two chapters (12 and 13) on Joyce Carol Oates.

Finally, the last chapter, we are told, “shows new dimensions of feminism in the context of the politics of the post-colonial culture, bringing out the historically material woman”—whatever that may mean! Surveys of bell hooks, Spivak and Sara Suleri rub shoulders with a generous sprinkling of names like Lyotard, Habermas, Appadurai, Clifford and Marcus, Audre Lordé etc., etc., but what they are doing there or what this chapter has to do with any other are questions which leave the reader guessing. Ultimately, it is as if the author herself has not understood the connections that she ought to be making, or is unable to say what she means.

This book conveys the over-all impression of a *kichadi* of name-dropping and a parade of ‘erudition’ substantiated by an impressive list of ‘Works Cited’, but very little else. It shows little evidence of intelligent assimilation or awareness of implications or ability to make connections. Added to this are frequent typographical or actual errors (Adrianne Rich, for instance in the epigraph to the Preface) and grammatical mistakes.

The book’s simplistic survey nature may make it a useful means of exposure for beginners. But even this limited usefulness may be negated by its muddled writing, not to mention its price.

Saroar V. Sherry Chand teaches in the Department of English, St. Xavier’s College, Ahmedabad.

## Devotional Offering

R. Rajamani

TIRUPPAVAI—GODA’S GARLAND OF IMMORTAL HYMN

Translated from the Tamil by R. Bangaraswami.

Published by Kalai Arangam, Chennai

**T**he fervour which marks the rendering of the thirty hymns composed by Andal (Goda Devi) in the month of Margasirsa (December-January) in many temples, discourses and households especially in South India, is captured in this devotional offering to the lay reader as well as to lovers of music. The lay reader has much to learn and gain from the introduction and commentary of Dr. Prema Nandakumar and the foreword by Vidwan U. Ve. Thirunagari Viraraghavachariar. The musical notations for rendering the hymns by late Gottuvadyam Vidwan Shri V.S. Parthasarathy Iyengar must be a veritable asset for music lovers and aspirants who would render the Tiruppavai in concerts. The illustrations gathered from Shri Srirama Bharati are teasing and pleasing.

The book has a lot to offer to non-Tamil knowing readers who may wish to delve more into Goda Devi’s literary mysticism, thanks to the English translation of the verses by R. Bangaraswami and the commentary itself. There may be a few among the readers who may have found the passage easier without the occasional usage of uncommon words like askesis and anabasis, but it would be churlish to say that reaching

out for the right dictionary in any way detracts from the efforts to reach the recesses of the soul and heart as portrayed in the twenty-third verse.

All the Tiruppavai hymns have the grace of poetry, the mood of mysticism, the sources of spiritualism and the most evocative descriptions of Nature as it was fifteen hundred years ago. The total surrender to the Divine which Andal may have demonstrated by entering the Lord the same way as she came upon this Earth is brought as a voyage in these verses. This is a gentle voyage which takes us behind the footsteps of the gopikas (women devotees) towards Lord Krishna, as seen through the eyes of Andal and her companions in later day Srivilliputtur.

The first five verses are the beginning of the seeking with the ‘*urata*’ or the Margasirsa rites linked to the ancient observance of ‘*pavai nonbu*’, being shorn of descriptions of rituals and by linking the verses to imagery about the prosperity of the countryside, Andal prepares us for the noble journey ahead. Ten verses are then sung to wake up the gopikas from their slumber to take them to the Lord with the guidance of spiritual leaders. The next five verses are by the gopikas who are joined by Nappinnai (Nila Devi, the consort of the Lord) herself in the further three verses, all of them together now waking up the Lord Himself and singing his praise. Six verses follow, describing the Lord’s feats and glory and the wonderful voyage ends in the ‘*phala sruthi*’ which assures the devotees of the compassion of Lord Vishnu.

Very insightful comments of Sri Shribashyam Appalacharyulu (gleaned from the devoted translation of his Telugu discourses by the scholar Shri C. Sitaramamurthi) are skilfully woven into the interpretation of almost every verse by the commentator. These are of great value to those who may delve into Tiruppavai for its spiritual rather than lyrical splendour. To take us into another level of understanding of the

*All the Tiruppavai hymns have the grace of poetry, the mood of mysticism, the sources of spiritualism and the most evocative descriptions of Nature as it was fifteen hundred years ago.*

mystic, Aurobindo’s works have been cited, joining us to the call of the Divine now and then. The commentator excels herself often as in the fourteenth verse where she refers to ‘*prakriti*’ (nature) as being charged with God-consciousness and the flora, fauna and humans in Gokulam are filled with Godliness. She makes us wonder where we have reached after fifteen hundred years, in which period man seems to have distanced himself not only from other living beings and things but the God-head itself! Another remarkable touch is in the twenty-third verse where she says no one knows what happens to us after we gain the vision of the Lord and quotes the pithy saying that those who have seen have not described and those who have described have not seen!

Not many mistakes or omissions are found in the text, though one felt that in the last paragraph of the commentary on the twenty-fourth verse, the reference to ‘*sevagam*’ as praising ‘greatness’ seems to differ from the translation of the verse, which refers to being at His ‘service’. The link between spiritualism and hedonism implicit in the description of the grease dripping from the elbows as we enjoy the rice-sweet ‘*kudurai pongal*’ seems to have been missed out somewhat. In the twenty-ninth verse, the penumbral period between night and day as a period of vision is well annotated by the reference to Aurobindo’s *Savitri*, but some inputs from the sage Ramanand, his very meaningful allusions to the state of sleep and state of consciousness might have been equally enlightening. But these are not shortcomings and are not intended to take away from the excellent and ennobling quality of the commentary itself, which rewards both the curious and the faithful. How one wishes national and global readership of such works could be promoted!

R. Rajamani, a retired civil servant, lives in Hyderabad.



## Stephen Greenblatt in Conversation with Manu Chakravarthi

Professor Stephen Greenblatt of Harvard University is Editor-in-Chief of the famous *Norton Shakespeare* as well as founder of the important New Historicist school of thought on cultural poetics. Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he has been awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Humanities Research Fellowship, the NEH Fellowship, the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, the Carnegie Fellowship, the Sterling Fellowship, the Robert Bates Fellowship, the NDAE Title IV Fellowship, the Wissenschaftskolleg Fellowship and a host of other honours.

Greenblatt's books include the trendsetting *Renaissance Self Fashioning* (1980), *Shakespearean Negotiation* (1988), and *Marvellous Possessions* (1991). Professor Greenblatt has been distinguished visiting Professor at virtually every major university in the US and several universities abroad.

Professor Greenblatt was in India in January and spoke to Manu Chakravarthi in Bangalore. We publish the excerpts of the conversation below.

**Manu Chakravarthi:** You are universally recognized as one of the chief architects of the School of New Historicism. At the present moment how would you place on record the exigencies that necessitated the new historicist method of reading literary texts?

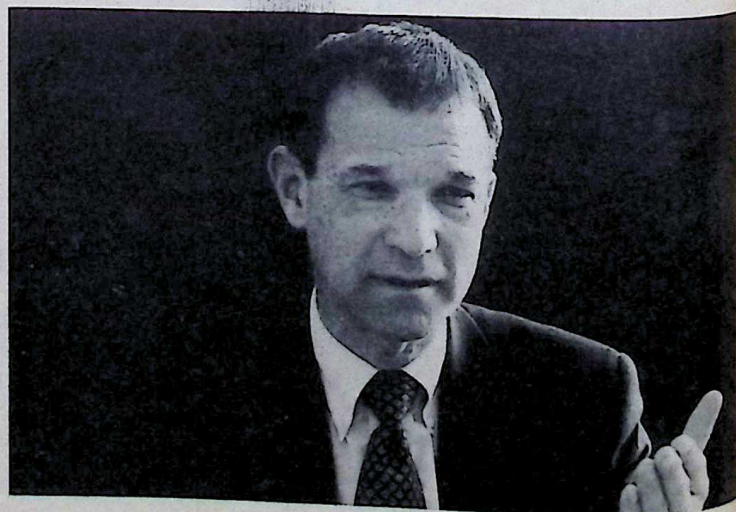
**Stephen Greenblatt:** New Historicism came out of a very special Anglo-American historical situation and condition of literary criticism, which was that of reading works in isolation from their cultural, historical and social context. I was trained as a formalist critic. Actually I am very glad I was trained like that. That's the paradox I am placed in now. But by the late 1960s, for a variety of reasons, including a kind of lyrical fervent, it seemed wrong to try to isolate works of art from the world that produced and consumed them. And slightly in the late 60s, and increasingly in the 70s, I began to look for ways of integrating literary works with their context. There was already a tradition that did try and practise it, and that was Marxism. I was a student of Raymond Williams at Cambridge. I learnt a lot from Raymond Williams and I thought of myself in the late 60s and 70s as basically practising something very much like Marxist literary criticism. But then a number of different factors intervened. For one thing Marxist literary criticism in America at least had seemed to me to have reached a kind of a dead end. It had a very very limited set of appropriate contexts in its repertoire. And it was into, or so it seemed to me, a base super structure model that made it very difficult to understand a more complex and varied phenomenon. That was first. Secondly, Deconstruction, Structuralism and Post Structuralism came on the scene and made much more problematical the traditional stable form of Marxist criticism, from the 1950's let's say. And so New Historicism emerged initially as a kind of uneasy amalgam of Marxism and the incipient and nascent form of Post Structuralism. And when it basically took off on its own, it was an attempt to restore, without the dogmatic ideology of Marxism, and understand more deeply what it meant for literary works to come out of very specific historical times and places and at the same time be transmissible across centuries to people who lived in very different historical and cultural situations.

**M.C.:** A major attempt of New Historicism is to locate several contemporary crises in the historical past, by tracing them in texts that are built on historical material. Would you say the attempt to use texts to understand many modern social, cultural and political problems has succeeded in shaping different approaches to studies in politics, history, literature and culture?

**S.G.:** I would say that whether we like it or not we have always been practising a kind of allegorical way of looking at the past. There is no such thing as an innocent apprehension or a neutral apprehension of the past. We are interested in what we are, compelled by what we need to be interested in. It's a very difficult process. You can approach an antiquarian history, but you can never get all the way to it in its own terms. So in that sense New Historicism is not different from any historical approach in really being driven by these contemporary concerns, except that New Historicism tends to be more self conscious and articulate, self reflexive, about doing so. I am actually very uneasy about what I would call excessive allegorization, of not treating the past with enough respect as something other than ourselves, something that cannot be moulded to our interests. So my interest is in creating a dialectical encounter between our own personal concerns and a past that resists and at the same time connects to what our concerns are.

**M.C.:** I raise this question to place in perspective your attempts to use a text like *The Tempest* to highlight the disastrous experience of colonisation. You have done similar things with other Shakespearean texts too. In what precise terms are your attempts different from, let's say, Edward Said's method of using cultural and literary writing to uncover the agenda of colonial discourses as it emerges in texts like *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*?

**S.G.:** I have a great deal of respect for Edward Said's work, and admiration too. So my first response would be that there is a considerable amount of overlap between Said's work and mine. We are both influenced in very complicated ways by Foucault. I would say, however, that it probably would be said that I have a more epistemological modesty than Edward Said, who has in some sense a more political agenda—more passionate and engaged in that sense than I. I admire it but it's not my political agenda and that's why I think in *Orientalism*, particularly Edward Said was unwilling to concede or to articulate the possibility of a reversal movement. It's all about the Western misperception of the Orient. But did the Orient have an accurate perception of the West? Did they not have their own mutually complacent fantasies? It seems to me that that refusal to acknowledge a dialectical misapprehension was the consequence of a political programme that Edward Said was at that moment passionately committed to. I admire and respect him for it but that would be the differentiation I would make between us. I also was writing against colonialism. I don't think one has to take a neutral position and say, well there are two sides of the question. That's not what I am arguing. But I do think you are obliged to be, within your means, as accurate as you can possibly be in this case of mutual complexities working in the entire process.





INTERVIEW

M.C.: Let me raise a question which extends the previous question. There is the argument that New Historicism has really not advanced the enterprise of decolonisation because it basically suspects historical writing, for history is too full of contradictions and one cannot be sure of it at all. In fact your rejection of Fredric Jameson and other Marxist historians comes from your disbelief in historical formulations because they are too contradictory and inconsistent. This is why the Marxist critics argue that you have pushed history into an intellectual arena and away from actual reality and thus reduced the scope of history itself. How would you answer this charge?

S.G.: I am to some extent guilty of this. I am not a politician, you see, Manu. I am not running for office. I am a literary historian and my attempt is to be honest, forthright and truthful as far as I can be. That's all I can claim.

But there are certain moments at which a kind of programme—political programme—intervenes with what you are trying to say. It might cloud your judgement too. So I have done the best I could have done with history. I believe in justice and I hate injustice. As far as possible, in my works, I have tried to be sensitive to the rights and wrongs of the historical situation that I am addressing. But I am not willing to abandon the historical truth in order to pursue a political programme. For example the *Norton Shakespeare* that I have edited, received a very violent attack in the Right Wing *London Times*. That's a Rupert Murdoch newspaper which is in the far Right now. They attacked the *Norton Shakespeare* for the triumph, as they said, of neo Marxism.

So, if for the point of view of certain critics on the Left, I am not far Left enough, from the point of view of critics of the Right I am violently to the Left. And I try to think why the *London Times* perceives me in the *Norton Shakespeare* as so far to the Left. Well, actually, I think Marxist critics are right that I am not so much to the Left, and I would say it's because at certain moments in the notes to the *Norton Shakespeare*, I call attention to, I think, rather, circumspectly and carefully, to certain things that are going on in the text when Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing* says that "I would marry her were she an Ethiop". I have a note which says "Ethiophe"—therefore black and ugly, according to the Elizabethan racist stereotype. Now I think that's true.

But to call it a racist type is already too much for the Right Wing. I don't call Shakespeare a racist. Actually I don't think he was, but I do think that that's what is going on at that particular moment of the text and I was willing to say that and that's already going too far to the Left from the point of view of the cultural Right. And, of course, that piece of mine on *The Tempest* was attacked again in very violent terms in the *Néws Week* by a very influential columnist who said that this was more dangerous than Saddam Hussain. Can you imagine?

M.C.: There is also this argument, of Hayden White for instance, that the New Historicist method introduces a "culturalist fallacy", in that it introduces a kind of reductionism wherein broad social formations are reduced to the status of the function of a culture, and that there is a further reduction of a culture to the status of a text. Further, as the argument goes, large societal structures eventually get reduced to a mere text. How do you respond to this?

S.G.: Well, I want to know what the alternative is. It's probably true that there is a kind of textualism that New Historicism got from Clifford Geertz and others in the 1970s and to some extent from Foucault. But on the other hand, in the first place, I would call attention to the fact that New Historicism is vitally interested from the beginning in what distinguishes one kind of text from another, and so it's not all flattened down to a single kind of cultural text. We are highly interested in differentiations. In the second place I would say that my problem with Hayden White is that he has applied Formalism, Northrop Frye archetypal formalism to history as if there were no distinctions between fiction and truth in a way that New Historicism is not willing to do.

M.C.: But, you see, on the other hand the Marxists argue that the sense of history of New Historicism is one of fragmenting history into a series of uncoordinated episodes that encourage the belief that any single episode may be proclaimed to be fully representative of a whole historical period. Now is this really a valid statement as regards the strength of the sense of history of New Historicism, of taking up a single historical episode and seeing it as fully representative of a whole phase?

S.G.: No, no, its not accurate. But I understand the nature, I understand where the criticism you say is coming from. In the first place New Historicism most definitely

doesn't have the old Marxist teleological faith in the idea that there is a progressive march in history. It was precisely that that we were breaking from. The charge of fragmentation, I would say, on the whole is inaccurate if fragmentation is set against a notion of a progressive march. I would even say that the events of the last decade suggest that the vision of a kind of progressive march, of the Marxist kind, was a lot of baloney. It simply has been manifested to be proven false. Now on the other hand, the charge that what is described by us is a much more fragmentary account is I think accurate, and it may be that New Historicism has a very difficult time coming up with a global theory including the theory of globalisation. The second thing that I would say is that, more interesting to me, the question of whether one small piece, what I call an anecdote, can adequately represent a whole. No, it can't. It can't for a very special reason, because the reason that anecdotes are interesting is that I found myself drawn to teasing out the implications of anecdotes, because it is a crisis in representation. The idea of representation itself is in crisis in the 20th century politically, sociologically and aesthetically and the anecdote as I have been using, and others too, is a kind of experimental testing ground, for the limits of representation not only attempts to imply a holistic kind of representation out of a tiny fragment.

M.C.: Let me turn closer to literary criticism. Now, for instance, a few critics argue that the insights of New Historicism are but what were available long ago, in somebody like Tillyard, and it is only a mechanical borrowing from Bakhtin, especially the "aestheticisation of disorder" relating to such carnivalist characters as Falstaff and others. This is also endorsed by the Marxist critics who call it old fashioned character criticism, which, they say, ignores the structure of the whole play. How would you react to such a position, of such a dismissal of your representation of characters?

S.G.: Well, I think it's probably just to say that in case of my own work my apprehension of larger structures is probably less significant, less powerful, than my apprehension of fragmentary situations. I wouldn't have said of characters but of fragmentary situations. I think it's probably true that as a criticism of my work it were just to say that I have difficulty settling for a grand over-arching account of the whole. But I would have said that was one of the reasons that my work doesn't much resemble Tillyard's, but, that it's actually much more, probably for ill or good, fragmentary, as well as much harsher and that I have lost faith in the idea of the whole in the sense, going back to your earlier question, there was a way in which I think my work is rather traditional, but I would have said that the genealogy, that the figure behind my work is Auerbach and not Tillyard. Let us say my work resembles the technique of Auerbach, of mimesis, of taking a small text or fragment and pushing and pushing and pushing until you begin to open up into a much larger social, historical whole. But I would say that Auerbach still believed—he wrote his great book in the 1940s—in the possibility of getting the whole and comprehending it all. And I have actually lost that much more scepticism about our capacity to get a glimpse of any large structure.

M.C.: I would also like you to respond to the view that New Historicism has an anachronistic method of reading literature, in that the attitudes and ideology of the twentieth century are projected backwards, that questions raised by New Historicism are actually questions that do not fit into the texts they examine. In fact Brian Vickers has this whole text, *Appropriating Shakespeare*, in which he goes to the extent of saying that in the Shakespearean plays the only enemies are the French and there are no colonies and the colonized. He asks, and I quote from Brian Vickers, "How can Greenblatt possibly use these texts to indict colonialism?" That's from *Appropriating Shakespeare*. What is your response to such an argument? By the way, I make it very clear that I think Brian Vickers is totally wrong.

S.G.: Brian Vickers! I don't think much of him. He begins his book with a quotation that in a way says it all. The quotation is from Shakespeare and it's from *The Tempest*... "But now I was the lord of this fair mansion". The implication of that quotation is that until recently he possessed this entire imagination and now he has lost it to upstarts, to Americans, outsiders, minorities, Jews, to people who are concerned about colonialism or gay lesbian theory or feminists. This is a book that is the expression, three hundred for four hundred pages, of some deep feeling of being displaced. That actually makes me very happy. I think it is good because I find this bully Englishman's position actually offensive and I also find it historically inaccurate. What does it mean to say that there is no colonization in *The Tempest*? *The Tempest* systematically uses a text that Shakespeare had clearly read from The East India Company. This point is not grasped that Shakespeare read a



historical text and was calling from it. This is not my imposition on the Shakespearean text. This is, I think, a document of Shakespearean usage. Now Brian Vickers, and a number of other critics, have tried their hardest to push this aside, and by the way, I should say that my interest is not in attacking Shakespeare or his culture. I treat Shakespeare so remarkably, and we can tell a remarkably capacious and open mind. But he was a person of his times and he was interested in precisely what was going on in his time.

M.C.: I would like you to react to something of Brian Vickers in particular. This is his argument as a refutation of your position. He says, "I have argued elsewhere that Shakespeare calls in question the humanist belief that eloquence is the defining mark of a good man by making so many of his most persuasive talkers evil. Caliban, I suggest, is another challenge to the humanists' naive belief that the gift of speech is inherently civilizing. He is resistant to nurture, imperious to reason, a creature that can only be counted on to follow its own desires, however violent".... You can imagine my extreme reaction reading all these things. Now doesn't this actually project the racist angle of Brian Vickers?

S.G.: I guess I would say that it projects something that the play allows you to do. The play doesn't prohibit your doing what Brian Vickers does with it. I think the play allows that perspective just as *The Merchant of Venice* allows an antisemitic perspective, just as *The Taming of the Shrew* allows a violent misogynistic perspective. Nonetheless I will say that what's interesting about Shakespeare is what precisely eludes Vickers' grasp or comprehension. It's all a reading of only one side of the statements. Not that those statements are inaccurate. They are accurate. But, actually, what happens in the play is much more than that. But what we get in Vickers is a kind of a parody of the Shakespearean position without any grasp of what lies on the other side. Well, I think if Shakespeare actually were the figure that Vickers represents, he wouldn't be meaningful to us. Shakespeare indeed offers a lot more to us.

M.C.: Let me raise a specific question that has enormous implications as far as a society like India is concerned. Now it's obvious, and you too make it clear, that Foucault has had a great influence on New Historicism and you talk of the presence of Foucault all over Berkeley. So the unmasking of power structures is an important aspect of the readings of New Historicism. But there is the great indictment of Foucault that he was not at all interested in reforming or transforming power structures. In fact his study of power structures is seen by many as "only depressing". Actually in an interview—I don't know if you have watched this—between Chomsky and Foucault in 1971 it became pretty obvious that for Chomsky Foucault did not represent anything significant for there was no active resistance to power structures in Foucault. Given this position what role would you say New Historicism has to play in the actual existential reality, what we have been talking about of a country like India or other so called Third World countries?

S.G.: First of all I would question the accuracy of the judgement of Foucault. I would have said that Foucault probably didn't represent the kind of political opposition that Chomsky represented. No. That's true. Or for that matter, Foucault's position was different from what other Leftist organizations represented. But Foucault was interested in the possibility of resistance in other places—in places that haven't been thought about or looked at. So in some sense Foucault is, from this point of view—after 1989—and in some other ways a more interesting figure because he saw resistance occurring not in the big organized movements of the Left which, after all, is now in shambles. But he saw resistance occurring everywhere. In places that we would not actually think of. He saw power existing everywhere and I think actually that is least arguable, though it would take us more time to argue that out. But arguably it is a more interesting position than the position that in a way goes back to the big, mega conflicts between mega labour movements on the Left and business movements on the right. That's the first thing to say. As far as New Historicism politics is concerned, I guess I would say, though it may not be much of an offer, not much of a claim, that probably if you want to change Indian society literary criticism is not the principal way to try to do it. That it's probably a mistake to think that you are going to bring down a government by doing a better version of literary criticism. But that doesn't mean that you have to be quietist.

I do think that cultural symbols are immensely important in times of stress. I don't speak for India, but for myself I grew impatient with the idea that if you came up with a more radical interpretation of *Moby Dick* you are going to end the

Vietnam War. That wasn't the way it was going to be ended. So my first response would be that it, in a way, as one says it, is mixing apples and oranges and that New Historicism should have a political programme like a party. I mean it doesn't have such a thing. On the other hand, having said that, and meaning it too, I would say that at certain moments, cultures mix up what I would call the "made up" and the "made real". Cultures renegotiate the boundaries between what you think is "fictional" and what you actually get yourself and other people to believe is "real". India, it seems to me, is in such a moment, a very heightened moment of re-negotiating the boundary, a dangerous moment of re-negotiating the boundary between the "made up" and the "made real". There are certain things that seem fictive but that other people are claiming as realities. Literary criticism is extremely sensitive to the processes by which people are made to believe in fiction as if they were truth or alternatively in which things that people have previously believed to be true are relegated to the position of fiction. And I think that we can address that issue. We can sort out things "intelligible" and "intelligent" about the processes by which large groups of people are made to believe that something that is expected is actually real, and even possibly die for such beliefs.

M.C.: Your reference to any re-interpretation of *Moby Dick* not being able to end the Vietnam war is well taken. But I raise this question for only one reason and I shall try to make myself clear. Today much of this notion of Hinduism is built on a singular construction, an imaginative construct, of our ancient traditions. When the BJP talks of Hinduism it almost seems to manufacture a certain kind of monolithic notion of the Indian philosophical traditions. And, therefore, the Indian philosophical traditions come, at least for those who have not been steeped in them, a form that has to be taken for granted, leading to accept what the BJP has to say as to what constitutes Hindu tradition. Now I relate all this to your statement in "Towards a Poetics of Culture". Let me read it out for you. "Theoretical satisfaction you write, 'seems to depend upon a Utopian vision that collapses the contradiction of history into a moral imperative'. And you maintain that this collapse is not accidental. You say, that '... this effacement of contradiction is not the consequence of an accidental lapse but rather the logical outcome of theory's search for obstacles that blocks the realisation of its eschatological vision'. Now when I transfer the statement to the Indian context what you have against theory is what we could have against the BJP which tries to create, because of its own eschatological vision and its notion of finality as far as Indian culture is concerned, something that could totally distort all these contradictions of history that are a part of the Indian philosophical traditions. So for us, literary criticism or a re-reading of the Indian philosophical texts would be more in terms of an actual 'praxis', not a mere intellectual opposition to 'theory' as part of another theoretical formulation, but a theory also forming a vital part of our 'political praxis'....

S.G.: I am too ignorant to address the Indian situation. But I would say on principle that any complex religion that was worth paying attention to, or any complex philosophical tradition, because I am not sure Hinduism is a religion in any sense, any complex belief system and tradition, is in fact made up out of not single and monolithic positions but out of long term contesting positions. And what happens in certain painful and stressful situations is that one group or another claims to have direct access to the truth of this tradition and produces a kind of protest parody for political purposes of what actually the tradition was worth in the first place. Let's say one of the things that is painful about this whole political process is that the religion itself or the tradition itself gets belittled. The Italian Christian Democratic Party makes a mockery of Christianity, the religious Right in Israel makes a mockery of Judaism. They reduce a very complex and rich thing to a kind of cartoon parody and I don't know if that applies to the Indian situation, I won't speak of it because I don't know enough, but I do think that is frequently what happens in situations of political stress. Manu, you are right in what you say. Let's hope something good emerges out of all these for all of us.

N. Manu Chakravarthy teaches in the Department of English, NMKRV College for Women, Bangalore.

Photograph by N. Sridharamurthy



# From Hai Bread! To Hybrid: An Essay in Evasion?

Tabish Khair

"But I, too, have ropes around my neck, I have them to this day, pulling me this way and that, East and West, the nooses tightening, commanding, choose, choose."<sup>1</sup>

"The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation."<sup>2</sup>

There can hardly be a more appropriate way of starting a study of 'hybrid/ity' in Indian English literature than by quoting its most famous 'creative writer' and, by some accounts, its most well-known 'theorist'. I refer to Salman Rushdie and Homi K. Bhabha and the above quotes dealing with an area of concern common to both these incisive minds which has given us a newly-made term—'hybrid'—applied not only to Indian English literature but also, it increasingly appears, to India and Indians. It is in this context that the quotes and the term 'hybrid/ity' assume significance. Much of the use of 'hybrid' and 'hybridities' is, of course, based on the best of intentions. 'Hybrid', 'Cyborg' and 'Creol' are the result of, shall we say, the internalization of intersubjectivity. They mark a valid movement away from the perception of divided subjects to the perception of divisions within the (constructed) subject. However, the positioning of 'hybrid/ity' in the so-called 'postcolonial' discourse and its connections to the now unfashionable term 'alienation', whose place it has largely usurped, are extremely problematical.<sup>3</sup> While I have no desire to speak on behalf of post-colonial literatures—even granting the existence of this many-headed monster—I do wish to situate 'hybridity' within the discourse of

'multiculturality' from which it emerged and which, once again, it side-tracked and undermined in the one-headed context of Indian English literature.

A casual glance might identify a resemblance between 'hybridity' and 'alienation' and, therefore, arraign me for dilatory obfuscation. The current dictionary meaning of 'hybridity' is "subjection to cross-breeding, interbreed" as well as, in the case of hybrid, "offspring of two animals, etc.", "person of mixed nationality" and "thing/word composed of incongruous elements". These definitions appear to locate 'hybridity' in the site of possible alienation by assigning to the hybrid two or more possible identities. However, the matter is much more complex than the casual glance can detect—and in some ways the use of 'hybridity' is opposed to 'alienation' and, in effect if not intention, serves to occlude the existence of the latter. Here, I must point out that I do not wish to enter the larger discussion of whether we can speak of 'alienation' in the light of the dissolution of the integrated self and the universal subject so widely proclaimed (and unfairly appropriated) by post-modernism. My use of alienation is restricted to its social dimension, as denoting a split between the textualized and constituted subject and the society of its origin and/or location. It is this basic meaning of alienation—basic also in the sense that the first, Aristotle's, use of (the Greek equivalent of) 'alienation'<sup>4</sup> referred to the social aspect—which is relevant when one observes the relationships Anglophone/Eurocentric Indians have with India (and also implied in Franz Fanon's text *Black Skins, White Masks*<sup>5</sup> in other post-colonial contexts). The hybrid—partly by giving a biological, organic intona-

*The opposition between 'alienation' and 'hybridity' has been played out in various recent discourses, though seldom highlighted. One area where this opposition is often visible is Bakhtinian studies.*

tion to the social issue of coming from different cultures or belonging to various cultures at the same time—conveniently occludes the intensity and, at times, the issue of alienation. 'Alienation' presumes a conflict, while hybridity assumes a conjoining, perhaps even an organic synthesis. This 'alienation' may or may not be a convenient or perhaps even an actual position for certain highly westernized intellectuals located in the West, but it is definitely the position of the majority of Indians who feel painfully split between two or more cultures. And then there is the issue of millions of other Indians who are not quite self-defined post-colonial 'hybrids' (beyond the sense that every subject and every nation or culture is a product of on-going hybridization) though they might be influenced by different cultures regarding aspects of their immediate material existence. As such, it is part of my contention that 'hybridity' as a theoretical position serves not just to obscure certain Indian and global realities but is, in itself, an attempt—determined or not—by highly-westernized Indian English academics and intellectuals to escape the negative connotations of being described as 'alienated'. For what they refer to as 'hybrid' is often the western-Indian 'babu sahib' and almost never, for example, the Indian whose father is a Maharashtrian Hindu and mother a Bengali Muslim. In this context, it is necessary to highlight the two main 'advantages' of being a 'hybrid', rather than being 'alienated' (which need not be based on an essentialist conception of identity and may actually be seen in terms of the clash between constituting and socially-dominant discourses). Firstly, the 'hybrid' is always a familiar, self-congratulatory construct: the Maharashtrian Hindu/Bengali Muslim appears to be less 'hybrid' (or even 'not-hybrid') simply because that kind of hybridization is not privileged in post-colonial discourse or familiar to most westernized post-colonial theorists. Secondly, the notion of a 'hybrid'—

where 'opposites' or separate entities meet and mesh to become 'one'—obscures the question of power. In fact, the degree to which the notion of power is obscured by most 'hybridity discourses' is evident from the very fact that only certain identities (such as the westernized 'post-colonial' one) are perceived as hybrids or 'more hybrid'. The question of power, on the other hand, is central to the concept of alienation with its constant stress on split and conflict.

The opposition between 'alienation' and 'hybridity' has been played out in various recent discourses, though seldom highlighted. One area where this opposition is often visible is Bakhtinian studies. While we will refer to Bakhtin's (careful) use of 'hybridity' later on, at this phase of my analysis I wish to cast only a passing glance at the way 'hybridity', a word central to Bakhtin, has been implicitly or explicitly placed in opposition to 'alienation' by Bakhtin scholars.<sup>6</sup> Take for example the following extract from Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist's book: "...Bakhtin is utterly opposed to the Romantic longing for wholeness, that homesickness which produced the German vision of an ancient Greek *Gemeinschaft* from which all subsequent history has been a falling away, a second exile from Eden into a world of fatally split consciousness in self and alienation in society."<sup>7</sup> While justified as an observation on Bakhtin's thought, this sentence assumes a negative definition of 'alienation' and, implicitly, moves in the direction of a "merry science" of hybridity. There is one major problem with seeing 'alienation' in purely pejorative terms and forgetting that even in theology 'alienation' need not be a negative or even a potentially evanescent state: one is left to account for the improbability of dialogue without opposition (and the improbability of this opposition without alienation). An example of such a non-oppositional 'dialogue' is provided by Anita Desai in her novel *In Custody*. Here is how she describes a scene of much sound and fury: "It was obviously one that was repeated night after night, everyone spoke as if on cue, fluently, and there was a lack of spontaneity, a staleness. There was the Indian camp and the Pakistan camp, the pure-Persian camp and the demotic-Hindustani camp. They quarrelled and

<sup>1</sup> Salman Rushdie: *East, West* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1994), p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Homi K. Bhabha: *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> For incisive discussions of this and related issues, refer to Aijaz Ahmad's *In Theory* (London: Verso, 1992) or his essays in Mongia's *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (London: Arnold, 1996) and Sprinker's *Late Imperial Culture* (New York: Verso, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> Here I am avoiding a direct and extended use of Marx's theory of alienation (in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*) not because it is no longer relevant (it is!) but because it is too complex to be brought into the argument in this essay and because my argument does not call for a detailed explication of 'alienation'.

<sup>5</sup> Franz Fanon: *Black Skins, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Which is not surprising given the fact that 'alienation' is often seen as a Marxist term and a large number of Bakhtin scholars in the West are wondrously busy trying to wash the faintest 'taint' of Marxism off Bakhtin.

<sup>7</sup> Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist: *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 65.



mocked and taunted and lost their tempers, but as if acting assigned roles. There was no evidence of anyone persecuting anyone else or of winning anyone over. . . The dialogue was as stale as the rice and gravy lying on tin trays all over the terrace."<sup>6</sup> Desai's scene is limited as an explanation. It has to be elaborated by examining the undue stress put by some Bakhtinians on the fact that (as Clark and Holquist put it only a couple of lines after the extract quoted earlier on) "the other is in the deepest sense my friend." What is missing from this image of the other as "my friend" is a recognition of the different spaces occupied by subjects ('self' or other/s). From one such space—existent in conquered and colonized states for example—the other may be effectively silenced in multiple ways. The other can only be the other if it opposes such 'silencing'. Only by imagining such an extreme (but quite common) scenario can one note the degree to which dialogue is oppositional. Unfortunately, not even the Bakhtinians' but also Bakhtin's other is, almost always, the communicative and social equal of the 'self'. Very little attention has been paid by Bakhtin and Bakhtinians to the phenomenon of the colonial or the racial (Black) Other, which has historically been something of a garbage bin for the (European) 'self'. In fact, if the Other was nothing but a 'friend', the Other would be the 'self'. It is impossible to imagine dialogue without opposition and conflict; and these factors presume the presence of 'alienation'. Alienation is or predates the point of departure, even when this departure is not physically enacted. In the Bakhtinian sense, too, we can talk of alienation as we talk of alterity. If there was no alienation, there would be no alterity and no dialogue. Let us assume a subject and another subject: what makes for alterity in this situation is the fact not just of communication but of disagreement, of conflict. This refusal to agree is both an index of alienation and can be seen as alienating the two subjects from one another (or from society/ies and discourses). In the absence of alienating factors and alienation, we will have no real dialogue. In fact, we will even have no alterity—just two sealed entities or one conjoined entity. However, it is a species of this conjoined entity that is implied by certain uses of the term 'hybrid/ity'. Here 'alienations'—as we shall see in the 'Indian English' context—have been safely digested, leaving us with a convenient 'hybrid'.

We cannot approach 'hybrid/ity' without tracing the development of the term within the Indian English context. As a term, it has had a number of precursors and its logic has developed from colonial notions of Indian 'incomprehensibility' to the largely nationalist idea of Indian 'multiplicity', and from there to the particularly urban, westernized and anglophone, bourgeois/professional class condensation of the possible meanings of the word. This is a development that links 'hybridity' to earlier theories and tendencies, ranging from the semi-classical European discourse of 'Indian Wonders' to the fiction of Kipling and Forster. However, while noting the link, one has to stress the ways in which 'hybridity' marks a shift in the earlier discourse on India's 'mind-boggling diversity'. It is to this 'diversity' that the colonial emphasis on India's 'incomprehensibility' and 'immensity' and the nationalist discourse highlighting India's 'multiculturalism' referred. That these discourses led to claims of hybridity is remarkable in view of the fact that 'hybrid/ity' suggests a blurring of borders that the earlier terms did not imply. The colonial attitude—perhaps only due to a tradition of Eurocentric binarism and the compulsions of practical governance—never confused its perception of India's diversity, size and even "irrationality" with the lack of boundaries, divisions and groups. That the boundaries and divisions the colonial mind imposed on India did not always coincide with existing lines of social, political or economic demarcation is another matter altogether. Similarly, the nationalist rhetoric portrayed India's 'multiplicity' as a congeries of differently-coloured and independently-shaped social groups. The stress was on the much-touted "unity in diversity", where the diversity was

*With the rise of Hindu reformism and Indian nationalism, this mode of perception becomes an affront to not only the Indian's perception of his past/s and culture/s but also a threat to his endeavour to construct a para-colonial identity and political reality.*

actual and palpable and the unity was mostly (but not completely) the creation of pan-nationalist and, at times, High Brahmanical discourse. The Indian national anthem with its confused and incomplete listing of separate linguistic, geographical and/or political units, its attempt to assemble a picture of India through such a listing of separate states and regions, is a living example of the nature of 'multiplicity' in the nationalist discourse. It is only with the coming of 'hybridity' in the last decade of the twentieth century that this separateness has been smelted into one organic unit, where the multiplicity of separate political, economic and social units in the political structure of 'one India' has been welded into a sort of 'psychological' in-betweenness that can be sited not in the material socio-historical conditions of the country or the group but in the individual. However, this is a long and significant process and needs to be traced in greater detail.

To start with, one has to refer to early colonial writings. This writing, of which various examples are available ranging from Macaulay to recent Raj novels, shares some basic features of 'Orientalist' discourse as delineated and examined by Edward Said.<sup>9</sup> However, the specific feature of this discourse is the fact that it is based on a subdued, non-dialectical contrast between India as an (Orientalist) object of European discovery and knowledge and India as the object of non-comprehension. It is an echo of this latter element that reverberates through E.M. Forster's Malabar caves. This perception of India as inhumanly immense and incomprehensible is not only connected to the discourse of 'eastern mysticism' but also an extension of the Orientalist discourse which perceived the Oriental as irrational. In other words, the incomprehensibility of India is an extended socio-geographical crystallization of the irrationality of the Indian, a transference of the logic of this Orientalist sentiment from the psychological to the social, historical and geographical.

With the rise of Hindu reformism and Indian nationalism, this mode of perception becomes an affront to not only the Indian's perception of his past/s and culture/s but also a threat to his endeavour to construct a para-colonial identity and political reality. As such, there is a marked move towards multiplicity as a defence: the largely pejorative view of India's diversity as 'incomprehensible' or 'irrational' becomes the view of India's diversity as colourful

and life-affirming. The nationalist claim of 'unity in diversity' is the formula for a multiplicity of units defined by belief in a real, historical or hypothetical Indianity. This formula, of course, has various dimensions. Sahir Ludhianvi's lyrics based on a popular devotional tune, *Ram-Rahim tero naam, sab kisanmiati de bhagwaan (Ram and Rahim are both Your Name, Bestow well-being on all O God)*, was the application of this formula to the religious sphere. A Hindu God-name and an Islamic God-name were ascribed to the same Divinity and a prayer for collective well-being appended to this. Similar applications and adaptations of this formula took place in social, educational, political and other fields. The national anthem has already been dealt with. Nehru and Gandhi's writings also hinge around this formula. Much of popular culture—Bombay films about twins separated at birth and raised in Muslim and Hindu families, for example—incorporates and propagates this formula until the early 80s and, occasionally, in the early 90s. Major novels and stories, such as those of Prem Chand quite early on and those of Kamala Markandeya around and after Independence—reflect aspects of this nationalist 'multiplicity'. However, the fact to be noted is that this belief in 'multiplicity' does not dissolve boundaries and identities into one organic 'hybrid'. Gandhi's *bhajan* names the Hindu god and the Muslim god separately and suggests that both of them refer to the same (incomprehensible) Divinity. There is no attempt to merge the Hindu god and the Muslim god into one organic, unitary 'whole'. Gandhi himself—in his autobiographical *My Experiments With Truth*—balances celebrations of 'cultural openness and multiplicity' with a well demarcated 'Hindu' identity. This is also the attitude to the influence of the West on India and Indians, and not only in the writings of Gandhi or the more westernized Nehru (*Letters to My Daughter*). In the famous song of the fifties, *Mera joota hai Japanese (My Shoes are Japanese)*, the foreign presence is clearly demarcated and marked out to be adaptations or choices in the shape of items of clothing. The Indian is portrayed as wearing shoes made in Japan, trousers stitched in England and a red Russian cap, but his 'heart' remains Indian. In fact, one can take this reading further and claim that the song insists on the separateness and superficiality of the foreign presence, posited against the myth of an essential Indianness. Whatever the level of differentiation, the boundaries stay. One is aware of the fact that multiplicity can never be singular; though the ideal of 'unity in multiplicity' has to be pushed

<sup>6</sup>Anita Desai: *In Custody* (Delhi: Penguin, 1994), p. 54.

<sup>9</sup>Edward Said: *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995).



through. It is interesting to note that a landmark Indian English text from this period, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*,<sup>10</sup> itself attempts a 'combination' of the 'West' and India on clearly demarcated lines: supposedly 'Indian', "rush-and-tumble" sentence constructions combined with a conventional English vocabulary. Not for Rao the so-called 'hybridised' English ('Chamchofy', etc.) later to be concocted by Desani and Rushdie.

However, after the sixties the pressure of circumstances, largely in the form of a series of renewed communal and regional conflicts, did induce a slight shift in this rhetoric. Once again a popular song can be indicative:

*Na hindu banega, na mussalman banega,  
Insaan ki aulad hai, insaan banega.* ...  
(Not a Hindu will he be, nor will he be  
a Muslim;  
The child of a human being, he will be  
human...)

Here the insistence on not becoming a Hindu or a Muslim is countered by the positive stress placed on becoming a 'human being'. This, however, is not so far from the nationalist formula as it appears to be. The 'human being' is merely a replacement for the 'Indian'. The human being is constructed not out of a complete repudiation of religion but, as the movie from which this song is taken indicates, of merely a curbing of the negative and violently antagonistic definitions of belonging to a particular religion. The human being is not even half Hindu and half Muslim; he is a humane Hindu or a humane Muslim. However, it might be this change in the nationalist rhetoric—in some ways part of a liberal rhetoric of universal humanism—which inadvertently points the way to the organic 'hybridity' of nineties literature and theory. In other words, this hybridity is based on a disillusionment of the prospects of attaining unity in diversity, if this diversity is not 'integrated'. The logic behind it was and is commonly aired by disillusioned secularists ("We are too religious"), nationalists ("We are too divided"), socialists ("We are too disorganised"), intellectuals ("The simplistic exoticism of multiculturalism") and others in India. The outcome of this disillusionment has been, on the reactionary side, the insistent nationalism of the conservative BJP and, on the liberal side, the collapsing of all differences into an organic 'hybridity' and a privileging of this 'hybrid' subject.

However, even in the context of suggesting the 'universality' of differences (which are located even within the subject), the 'hybrid' contradicts itself by implying the existence of 'pure' and separate 'parents'. The 'hybrid' as a constituted subject is based on the notion of at least two universal, united subjects who parent it.

Thus, the 'hybrid' not only marks a contradiction in terms, it also brings an end to all political, dialectical and materialist discussions of multiculturalism. Rushdie himself has used both multiculturalism and (versions of) hybridity without, at times, realizing that they are different, even contradictory, terms. Of late, Rushdie's oeuvre has dovetailed completely into 'hybridity' partly due to the tragic affront of the so-called fatwa and partly due to the institutional and cultural siting of Rushdie's voice. Without even going back to his earlier *Midnight's Children*,<sup>11</sup> it is easy to trace how Rushdie's concept of hybridity/multiculturalism has become increasingly aligned in the direction of a largely Eurocentric description of hybridity in his last three novels. The multiplicity of *The Satanic Verses*<sup>12</sup> is a more fertile and revolutionary concept than the anglophone hybridity of *The Moor's Last Sigh*.<sup>13</sup> While a type of hybridization rears its head in *The Satanic Verses* this is not the organic 'hybrid' of *The Moor's Last Sigh*; a fact evident in the slippages of and interchanges between Chumcha and Gibreel Farishta and the contradictory reports of the 'drowning' of Mirza Saeed's and Ayesha's village, among others. In his next book (skipping *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*), we have a statement on the condition of being 'multicultural' that can be called authorial speech in the Bakhtinian sense of the term:

*"But I, too, have ropes around my neck,  
I have them to this day, pulling me this  
way and that, East and West, the nooses  
tightening, commanding, choose, choose.  
I buck, I snort, I whinny, I rear, I kick.  
Ropes, I do not choose between you.  
Lassoos, lariats, I choose, neither of you  
and both. Do you hear? I refuse to  
choose."*<sup>14</sup>

Even here, in comparison to *The Moor's Last Sigh*, there is a greater awareness of the exteriority of the hy-

bridizing forces. The speaker, shall we say, 'hybridized' not just because he chooses, but also because he refuses to choose. The pressure of choice is exerted from the outside. There is no united, organic hybrid in the absence of the ropes which pull the constituted subject this way and that and which the subject partly resists and partly succumbs to. Of course, even here Rushdie's anglicized and privileged-class blind spots are evident: the refusal to choose is itself a choice, especially when it comes from a person whose physical site of articulation seems to have been determined by an inordinate pull on one of the ropes. By the time we come to *The Moor's Last Sigh* these blind spots have grown to a size where they prevent Rushdie from noticing the upper-middle class, anglophone nature of the 'hybridity' that he consciously sets out to champion. The 'hybridity' documented in this novel, as I have pointed out at some length in an article in the *London Magazine*,<sup>15</sup> is middle/upper class and anglophone. This is the colonial and 'post-colonial' hybridity which arose in a certain historical moment and which is mostly being championed at the expense of other pre-colonial 'hybridizations'. In one way, Aurora, the Moor himself and other 'hybrid' characters in *The Moor's Last Sigh* are the latest puppets of nostalgia in the stubborn saga of Empire/Raj literature; only the person pulling the strings this time is not an Englishman but a post- and colonial, anglicized Indian.

This tendency of locating the hybrid not only as a particular bio-socio-cultural individual but also in a particular historical phase is even more pronounced in the influential writings of Homi K. Bhabha:

*"The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation."*<sup>16</sup>

This is quite a mouthful as a statement, but what it actually means is that the 'post-colonial' (and postmodern) age is a moment of transformation which creates 'cultural hybridities'. This is even more evident (and the centrality of the 'colonial' heavily marked) when we consider other statements on the topic by Bhabha, such as: "Hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial

power..."<sup>17</sup> or "Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation..."<sup>18</sup> There are a number of problems with this formulation, in spite of the fact that it has become commonplace to see 'our age' as characterized by cultural hybridization. First of all, the placement of 'hybridity' in a particular historical moment undercuts the common, more general claim (even of hybridites) and perception that 'hybridization is the condition of existence and identity'. More problematically, this and similar statements lay bare the social positioning of this discourse on 'hybridity'. As in the case of Rushdie, it becomes evident that the hybridity being spoken of is related to the post-colonial situation and the 'East-West' connection. For one can argue that the current 'historical moment' is not just 'heterogenizing' but also 'homogenizing'. For example, historians like Mohan Singh Diwana<sup>19</sup> have noted that most Indian poets from the 13th to the 17th century wrote in three or more languages. This cannot be said of Rushdie or other Indian English novelists who might or might not speak another Indian language, but write only in English. Here, if a hybrid is defined as being polyglot, it can be said that Rushdie or Bhabha is less of a 'hybrid' than say the medieval Guru Nanak Dev who wrote in four languages. In fact, the association of 'hybridity' with only certain phases of history is deeply problematic; and 'historical hybridity' should be viewed keeping in mind the fact that the epitome of the 'hybrid' in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe was the Orang-utan, a newly discovered Ape that had become the focus of scientific and lay attention as 'half-human and half-animal'!

However, there are other—etymological and ontological—objections to the current 'post-colonial' use of 'hybridity'. As stated before, this use of the 'hybrid' implies the existence of two 'purities/unities' (non-hybrids), and as such does not solve the problem of the 'pure substance' or the 'unified and autonomous subject' anyway. This is more so because the 'hybrid' is formed in the same field as the 'unities/purities' it is supposed to counter. In using words based on 'hybrid', Bakhtin had probably been aware of this danger and had, as such, spoken of the novel as a hybrid of languages rather than suggesting that there was a particular hy-

<sup>11</sup> Salman Rushdie: *Midnight's Children* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981)

<sup>12</sup> Salman Rushdie: *The Satanic Verses* (Dover, USA: The Consortium, 1992)

<sup>13</sup> Salman Rushdie: *The Moor's Last Sigh* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995)

<sup>14</sup> Rushdie: *East, West*, p. 211.

<sup>15</sup> Tabish Khair, "Elegy to an Empty Grave", *London Magazine*, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Bhabha, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Bhabha, p. 112.

<sup>18</sup> Bhabha, p. 114.

<sup>19</sup> Mohan Singh Diwana, "Indian Socio-Linguistic Background", *Language and Society in India*, Proceedings of a Seminar (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, 1967).



brid language<sup>20</sup> in the context of linguistics or a hybrid individual in the context of individuals,<sup>21</sup> or a hybrid novel in the context of (pure) novels.

No discussion of 'hybridity' can be concluded without a reference to M.M. Bakhtin, for Bakhtin is immediately responsible for the incorporation of the term 'hybrid' in the so-called post-colonial theoretical discourse even though he himself appeared to have been wary of using 'hybrid' and preferred 'hybridization' or 'hybridity'. However, there are various differences between Bakhtin's and current post-colonialists' use of the term. Bhabha, we have seen above, often implies that the hybrid is a product of a particular (our?) historical period/s. For Bakhtin,<sup>22</sup> however, hybridity is a condition of life: in the sense that any language that is alive is dialogical and what is dialogical can be seen as hybridized. One can infer that heteroglossia is the condition of survival of a language; pure monoglossia obtains only in dead languages.

As is implied above, Bakhtin's use of hybridity is, shall we say, dialogical. Hybridity operates by way of language in Bakhtin. But Bakhtin never calls a language the 'hybrid' of two or more languages. What he says is, for example, that two or more languages combine in active and heightened heteroglossia to create a hybrid literary form (the novel). Bakhtin seems to be aware that, non-biologically, hybridity can be used only in a cross-categorical context. It is this that protects him from the pitfalls into which even a highly erudite post-colonial thinker like Bhabha stumbles. There is an awareness in Bakhtin that two of the same sort cannot create a hybrid in the same category: they at best create a third of the same sort. The so-called hybrid, if it is created, has to belong to another category. The 'hybrid' is not the fusion of one unity with another unity, but a reordering of the elements that go in the construction of two or more presumed unities. This is evident even in Bakhtin's use of the term 'hybridization': "The same hybridization, mixing of accents and erasing of boundaries between authorial speech and the speech of others is also present in other forms for transmitting characters' speech."<sup>23</sup> Even here—where the active sense of 'hybridization' makes the notion of a 'hy-

brid' less dangerous and contradictory—Bakhtin distinguishes between the category of intra-novel speech (authorial speech and the speech of others in the novel) and the separate 'hybridized' category of extra- and inter-novel art and forms of transmitting the speech of characters.

This brings us to one final objection: the fact that 'hybridization' is not the same as 'hybrid'. Hybridization is an active, dialectical and/or dialogical term that connotes an on-going process, while 'the hybrid'—in spite of Bhabha's reiteration that it "is not a third term"—is a static description. The 'hybrid' is; it is not becoming. In this sense, the use of 'hybridization' is less problematic than the use of 'hybrid' or even of 'hybridity'.

We have noted earlier that 'hybrid' and 'hybridity'—like creol<sup>24</sup> or cyborg—mark a valid movement away from the perception of divided subjects to the perception of divisions within the constituted subject. Thus far the argument is genuine and needs to be respected. However, to return to the past, 'hybrid' is not such a new term in descriptions of India after all. India has historically been seen by Europeans as the land of 'hybrids'. At least from 500 BC downwards to the Renaissance, European writers and chroniclers—Lucian (based on Ctesias' descriptions), Pliny, Isidore of Seville, Julius Valerius, Brunetto Latini, Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville and others—have populated India with 'hybrid' flora and fauna. The medieval 'Indian Wonders' cycle of legends and literature were based on such an idea of India—as a country of wonders, populated by harpies, unicorns, phoenixes, griffins and dragons, to name just a few 'hybrids'. These descriptions not only connect obliquely with later colonial descriptions of India's irrationality (mentioned earlier on), they also have two interesting features which should not be confused with their grotesque nature within Europe: 1) they are fabulous and fabled beings, reported as true from a distance, and 2) they are European hybrids. Harpies, unicorns and griffins do not exist in Indian cultural and mythical (classical or folk) traditions. No doubt, India has its own grotesque hybrids—ranging from the god Ganesh to certain folk tales of 'dynes', wolf-boys and 'yetis'—but it does not have harpies, unicorns, griffins or phoenixes.

<sup>24</sup>I would like to note that 'creol' has certain advantages over the 'hybrid'. Firstly, 'creol' has to do with languages and, secondly, it suggests an on-going process. Creols, unlike mules, do not have one fixed and repeatable 'identity': their very nature suggests change, development, 'bastardization'.

These are 'images' imposed on India from 'abroad': they highlight the 'reported' nature of the hybridity of India. Above all, they are a reminder of the hidden condition of 'power relations' in all such reports, of the fact that (as Edward Said would put it) no production of knowledge can ignore the author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances. It is this factor that should make us look again at the ideological siting of the madenew, post-colonial or post-modern, discourse of 'hybridity'.

To sum up, the 'hybrid'—as we have seen—is not only a risky, contradictory, class-conditioned and Eurocentric concept in the context of Indian literature and life, it is also metaphorically a contradiction of the ethos of multiplicity that forms the solid breeding ground under the feet of 'hybridity'. This is further evident when we trace the 'hybrid' to its biological roots and realize that the hybrid is sterile. The hybrid cannot give birth to anything else, not even to its own likeness. This is too significant an implied contradiction to be dismissed as a 'play of meanings'. The sterility of 'hybrid' joins with its middle class and elitist location in Indian English life, and its reduction of differences to either a static unity or to 'essential' and unified 'parent subjectivities', to plot its own dissolu-

tion as a concept of multiplicity, of multi-culturalism, of diversity and of the profusion of differences. There has earlier been (and still is) a perception that India could best be represented by the epithet 'Hai Bread!', a 'linguistically-hybrid' epithet that nevertheless underlined the depiction of India as the Other—a place of (non-European) want, hunger, poverty and apathy. The limitations of such a (at times, self-perception are reduced to insignificance in the light of the entry of the post-colonial cultural 'Hybrid'—a nonsensical beast, found mostly in the dense and powerful jungle-myths of a Eurocentric, anglophone elite that wishes to justify and legitimate its own existence and avoid facing its own internal and external contradictions.

Tabish Khair, a 31-year-old Indian journalist and writer, is working towards a doctorate at the University of Copenhagen. He is the author of *An Angel in Pyjamas* (Harper Collins 1996) and three other collections of poems. His poems and scholarly papers have appeared in *London Magazine*, *P.N. Review*, *Wasafiri*, *The Independent*, *The Rialto*, *Planet*, *Metre*, *Literature Alive*, *Indian Literature*, *Kunapipi* and *Manuscript*. He has won the *Poetry Society's All India Poetry Competition* for 1995-96.

## Rootedness of Indian Writing

Rita Kothari

THE ROLE OF TRADITION IN LITERATURE

By Sitakant Mahapatra

Vikas Publishing House, 1997, pp. 132, Rs. 195.00

Sitakant Mahapatra's book is an interesting account of how creative writers and artists through different ages and cultures negotiate their relationship with the past. The "Past" in Mahapatra's book is synonymous with tradition and tradition is synonymous with a pure repository of values handed down to us. (One disagrees with this very foundational assumption of the book. There is an elision of the role of the present—through institutionalization and the media, not to mention interested groups—in retaining, reviving, manipulating traditions.) Mahapatra sets out to examine the trend in art and literature of imbibing elements from great and little traditions. Literature mirrors our ambivalent relationship with the past as the past is both liberating and binding. In denying traditions we admit their persistence. Mahapatra illustrates this through artists as wide ranging as Kumaran Asan and Marquez.

The thirteen essays in his book are a study of the role "rootedness" in tradition has played in the creativity of writers such as Tagore, Paz, Marquez, Yeats, A.K. Ramanujan, Nicholas Roerich and Kumaran Asan. Not all essays are of individual poets. The opening essay is on the *Mahabharata* and its relevance to our times. The *Mahabharata* has been a metanarrative for many an Indian. It has served as a metaphor for diverse emotional and political situations. While the essay is a rich detailing of different interpretations of the *Mahabharata* by different authors, Mahapatra assumes that it is a shared tradition for all Indians and has seamlessly helped shape our national ethos. The homogeneity in such an assumption is problematic considering the pluralistic nature of our society. Secondly, Mahapatra forges a connection between the *Mahabharata* and present day reality by making oversimplified correspondence such as: "The

<sup>20</sup>Which is not the same as noting the heteroglossia that envelopes all living languages.

<sup>21</sup>Which is not the same as saying that all identities are fluidly constituted and, as such, products of hybridization.

<sup>22</sup>M.M. Bakhtin, Translated by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson: *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin, USA: University of Texas, 1996).

<sup>23</sup>Bakhtin, p. 320.



## The Old Order Changeth, Does It?

Sukrita Paul Kumar

THE KNIGHT'S MOVE

By Giriraj Kishore. Translated from the original Hindi by Prajapati Sah.

Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, 1996, pp. 480, Rs. 200.00

**T**he best thing *The Knight's Move* could do to me is to make me get to the original Hindi copy of Giriraj Kishore's novel *Dhai Ghar*. Covering an era of social and political strife and focussing on familial relationships, the narrative moves with felicity. The author makes no pretence at working out resolutions and reconciliations. The novel in Hindi is charged by a local ambience created through a language, a dialect full of metaphors and idioms of the region. All this lends authenticity to the experiences narrated. But going back to the English translation after a contact with the original, it is inevitable that I would now be more conscious of the "translation" aspect of the novel. Needless to say that such a culturally specific novel is a translator's challenge. Fiction written with a metropolitan and contemporary context is indeed easier to translate.

"My name is Bhaskar Rai, I am the last of the Rais of an old and well-to-do Rai family of western Uttar Pradesh. There'll be no more Rais after me". The opening of the novel *The Knight's Move*, is stark and effective, and the translation at this point is direct and faithful, retaining the force of the simplicity of both the style and the language of the original Hindi. At once one gets curious wanting to know the story of the Rais, the history of that specific family from western Uttar Pradesh. Why will there be no Rais any more? Maybe the last one does not have any children. But no, the next sentence informs us "There are of course, my children. . ." So then we are to get into the story of the decline of fiefdom, the diminishing of Zamindari, of in fact Raihood.

Giriraj Kishore, a well-known name from the Hindi fiction of contemporary times, captures poignant moments from the history of a social reality contextualized within a specific area of Uttar Pradesh. Apparently this is a history of focussing on social transformations knitted into political changes at the macro level. On the one hand a countrywide spread of the cry for freedom from the British and on the other an incorrigible sycophancy of a whole

class of people, both the streams run parallel to each other.

Contextualized in the history of an age of transformation, the novel presents a variety of characters responding to the dynamics of the times. While one of them owns the Gandhian way existentially another one seeks freedom from familial demands.

Through the carefully worked out narrative Bade Rai, Majhhale Rai and Chotte Rai, each one of them acquires a distinctive shape and personality; with that, the individualistic identities, aspirations, uprisings begin to threaten the familial bonding within the Rai family. The backdrop of socio-political turbulence merges gradually with the main narrative. Norms and values of the old world cannot be taken for granted any more. There is a slow crumbling of the feudal structures of relationships within the family as much as outside it, and resulting from these disturbances the ground is prepared for the new social order, fresh political design and different equations in relationships within a family.

"I felt this family had witnessed a battle of Plassey first when Majhhale Rai had made his declaration of independence by marrying the new Majhhale Chachi. It saw a second Plassey when he pulled apart the entire fabric of values that the Rai family had laboriously woven over a period of centuries by adopting an orphan. We were now on the threshold of a third Plassey. A call for independence had gone out. . ." (p. 296).

In the Translator's Preface, Prajapati Sah talks about how "exhilarating" translating *Dhai Ghar* had been for him. But one can well imagine the anguish and rigour gone into a translation demanding a difficult negotiation between two entirely different linguistic and cultural worlds. The sense of the "other culture" permeates perfectly and legitimately in the English translation with an effective usage of the original kinship terms and forms of address. It is upto the translator after all to stretch the scope of the target language and

Sahitya Akademi Award-Winning Hindi Novel

## THE KNIGHT'S MOVE

GIRIRAJ KISHORE



create the possibility of accommodating another culture.

The end of the book carries a section called Notes and Glossary explaining Hindi terms used in the novel and providing comments on the mythological references. As an involved reader, I find it rather cumbersome to disengage myself from the narrative in the process of looking up a reference at the back of the book. On the other hand, not to have an access to the meaning of those terms would be frustrating for the reader. I find it much more acceptable and useful to have a short, perhaps a one-line explanation of the terms as a footnote in small print on the same page. A researcher or a scholar seeking more explanation needs to make efforts to get to the appropriate sources.

One wishes that before seeing the light of day the translated novel had been combed more finely to get rid of duplication of paragraphs here and there as well as spelling and typographical errors. For a smooth reading of the book, a clean text, conscientiously proof-read, is the least a reader demands of the publisher.

Giriraj Kishore's novel *The Knight's Move* tells the story of an epoch and has the grandeur of an epic like stature worthy of attention. The novel ends with "I, Bhaskar Rai, son of Hari Rai. . ." just as it began with "My name is Bhaskar Rai. . ." The two ends connect up with a long middle unfolding, the tale of the best and the worst moments of the Rai family. The translator triumphs in making it available to the reader in English as an engaging novel.

Sukrita Paul Kumar teaches at Zakir Hussain College, Delhi University. She has a number of publications to her credit including a new collection of poetry entitled *Folds of Silence* (Kokil Publications, 1997)



# Of Books And Awards

Stephen Moss

Stephen Moss is Literary Editor of *The Guardian*. He was on the jury for the Commonwealth Writers Prize—Eurasia Region, 1998 which awarded the prize for the best book to Vikram Chandra for his *Love and Longing in Bombay*. This is the text of the speech he made at the British Council Conference on Commonwealth Writing.

We are happy to announce that from the next issue Stephen Moss will write a regular Letter from London on the latest books and trends in publishing exclusive to *The Book Review*.

It is a great privilege to be here in India participating in this event—and to be on the jury for the Eurasia section of the Commonwealth Prize. I am currently in the middle of judging three book awards. We completed our deliberations for the Whitbread Award for Best British Novel last month; and next month the judging process begins for the UK's premier Science Book Prize—an exciting undertaking at a time when literature is drawing increasing inspiration from the work of scientists and from the reflections of scientific thinkers such as Dawkins, Dennett, Gould and Hawking.

This period of exposure to book prize culture has left me a little weary—and perhaps a little wary too. The UK has many book prizes, some with the most bizarre criteria. I recently received a press release from Dundee City Council announcing a new prize of pounds 6,000 for a first novel. Fine, you might think, any award to assist new writing is worth while, but the rubric worried me: "To be given for a first novel set in the city of Dundee." This seemed me *reductio ad absurdum* of prize-giving: a case of commerce dictating art. No doubt Dundee would provide a rich tapestry for an aspiring novelist, but to impose such a straitjacket seemed ridiculous: ultimately of no help to the city or the writers.

There are those who would argue that all prizes are flawed. Did Dickens, or Hardy, or Austen, or Henry James need the encouragement of prizes, they ask rhetorically. There are those, too, who say that juries invariably favour the avowedly literary over the popular. This old chestnut re-appears every year when the Booker shortlist is announced. Who? Who? WHO? ask the would-be anti-elitists who wonder why blockbusters and sci-fi and best-selling genre fiction are routinely ignored.

It is important not to dismiss these arguments, for they do have some truth. Prize culture—as my Dundee example shows—can be counter-productive, inward-looking, self-reflexive, an exercise in mutual self-congratulation, an excuse for a black-tie dinner or a good party. And if the Booker and the other major prizes are unable properly to reflect the diversity of current writing and to embrace the now very broad audience for fiction, they inevitably lose their credibility.

I have argued elsewhere that last year the Booker was in danger of doing just that. The shortlist was widely rubbished and the event ignored by middle-market papers which would

once have given it extensive coverage. The broadsheets covered it dutifully—but with no real enthusiasm. I had no sense of a public debate, even among the so-called chattering classes, about which book ought to win. In any case, it would have cost around pounds 100 to participate in that debate—because that would have been the price of buying all six books on the shortlist.

In *The Guardian*, I called for three things: panelists to be drawn from a wider age range and more diverse backgrounds; a less dismissive approach to so-called genre writing; and, most important, a clause in the rubric whereby all the shortlisted titles would immediately go into paperback under a joint imprint, perhaps with some of the proceeds going to an organization devoted to furthering literacy. I recalled Penguin doing precisely that in the early 1980s, with a marvellous list. I was broke at the time but managed to afford four of the books on the list, and thus had an opinion on—and a stake in—the final outcome. Bookshops were full; people were involved. It was a public event, not a private dinner.

Sadly, none of the suggestions has been taken up: the average age of this year's panel is around 60—so I don't expect any writers from the so-called "chemical generation" to be on the list; genre fiction will remain a poor relation; and publishers, doing very nicely with pounds 16 hardbacks or pounds 10 trade paperbacks, tell me my promotional scheme is crazy. Books are very buoyant at present in the UK. Fiction is "cool" among the twenty- and thirty-somethings. There is a new taste for very personal, confessional writing à la Nick Hornby; for tragicomic soul-searching à la Bridget Jones; for grand narrative histories by generalist historians such as Simon Schama; for wide-ranging attempts to explain what we are and where we came from by scientists such as Richard Fortey. By contrast, literary prizes—especially those for fiction—appear becalmed, unable to tap the passion for books and evangelise in the way the Booker once attempted to.

UK fiction, too, seems unsure of itself. The death of the British novel is a rather hackneyed theme, but set against the power and imaginative range, the sheer ambition of the American novel, and the richness and strength of Commonwealth fiction, it would appear a suitable case for treatment.

It seems that Americans—Pynchon, Roth, DeLillo spring to mind—are currently writing the type of novels that Britons wrote in the mid-19th century—novels that mapped a country, tried to make sense of a culture, drew together the threads of past, present and future.

By contrast, contemporary British writers—filled with post-modernist doubts about the "truth" of anything—obsessed by literary form, suspicious of moral assertion—appear marginalised. With DeLillo, John Updike, James Smiley, Anne Tyler and Toni Morrison all publishing novels in the UK in 1998, it could be a year of very pointed searching for the British novel.

Few of these strictures apply to Commonwealth writing. Margaret Atwood, Carol Shields, Anne Michaels, Vikram Seth, Vikram Chandra, Rohinton Mistry, Peter Carey and others have in recent years produced glittering fictions whose range and power are unquestioned. The Commonwealth Prize, in the ten years of its existence, has been at the forefront of recognising that achievement. Here, perhaps, it can teach the Booker Prize a thing or two. In 1994, the prize for best book was rightly awarded to Vikram Seth, whose *Suitable Boy* failed even to make the shortlist for the Booker. In 1995 the jury recognized Louis de Bernieres's *Capitaine Corbelli's Mandolin*, which again had passed the Booker by. In 1990 the book prize was won by Mordecai Richler, who has never been given a due by UK prize juries. Similarly, it has recognized fine books by Rohinton Mistry, Anne-Marie MacDonald and Earl Lovelace which received insufficient attention in the UK.

If the question is ever posed, why we need a Commonwealth Prize when the Booker embraces Commonwealth writing, point to the Booker's erratic record in recognising writers—and perhaps, to a certain cultural insularity inherent in the Booker process that seems to make it comfortable only with a certain type of Commonwealth writing. The federal nature of the Commonwealth Prize also encourages delving into the nooks and crannies that the more monolithic UK prizes resist to penetrate.

My only criticism would concern the question of whether it should include works in translation. For example, can writing in English truly reflect the range of literature in India, or the extent of the Indian experience? Clearly there are practical difficulties, but there ought to be some way in which the Commonwealth Prize can recognize writers writing in languages other than English. After all, the Commonwealth thrives on a creative diversity, and genre fiction depends on particularity. What does not, I hasten to add, mean that I look forward with bated breath to the Great Dundee Novel—written in Gaelic.



# The Nature of Music

T.S. Parthasarathy

INDIAN CLASSIC MUSIC—AN INVITATION

By Raghava R. Menon

Vision Books, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 152, Rs. 95.00

There is a plethora of literature on Indian classical music dealing with both the practical and theoretical aspects of the art. Volumes have been written on the history of Indian music, lives of musicians and composers, 22 srutis and other technical aspects. There is practically no literature on the nature of music, or how to discriminate between good music and bad. In 1976 Raghava R. Menon wrote his *The Sound of Indian Music* in which he had dealt with the nature and mystery of Indian music and its appreciation by readers. Written with great sensitivity and clarity, the book was intended to be useful to the professional, the amateur and the layman.

Menon holds two post-graduate degrees in mathematics and political science in addition to the Sangeet Prabhakar degree from the Allahabad University in Hindustani music. A man of many parts, he has been a visiting professor at Colgate and Copenhagen Universities and a widely travelled man of letters. He has been music critic in both eastern and western music for leading dailies. He is also the author of an authoritative biography of the immortal singer K.L. Saigal.

In a series of short articles the book takes the reader along the history of Indian music which, the author says, is essentially a subjective stream of consciousness—deliciously inaccurate and mythical, full of nostalgia and received wisdom. "He feels that the true history of Indian music lies within the raga and its changing faces through time."

The second chapter of the book deals with 'the Story of the Tanpura'. Intensive sadhana or practice is often put forth as a *sine qua non* for musicianship. But the author points out that unless the mind apprehends the swara and its myriad relationship in a raga, sadhana may remain merely a physical exercise. It is here that the Tanpura plays a vital role and helps the student through the crisis of learning. He avers that there is a mystic connection between this instrument and practice. Ustads like Faiyaz Khan used four Tanpuras, not without justification. It is not a mere drone and a Tanpura can only be un-

derstood by someone who has spent years in its company.

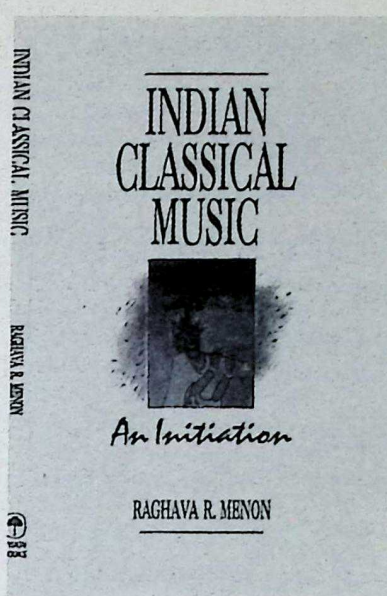
The raga is the unique feature of Indian classical music, both Hindustani and Carnatic and has no parallel in world music. The chapter on 'the Story of Raga' is not merely interesting but thought provoking. Tyagaraja described ragas as 'devatas' or divine forms. Mystery surrounds a raga, and every time a raga is sung, it wakes into life.

The fourth chapter deals with 'Composition and Architecture'. The Dhrupad is predominantly religious in character and its structure is more formal. The Khyal has gradually taken its place and occupies the major part of a modern concert. Dialects of Hindi like the Braja Bhasha are best suited for Khyals and add to the appeal of this composition.

In any Indian discipline, the guru of preceptor plays an important role and this is very pronounced in music. No gharana has any meaning without a Guru embodying it vitally. In Carnatic music, there is no gharana but what is called a 'Bani' which represents the style of a particular Guru. The author discusses the 'backdrop of the Guru' in great detail and stresses the importance of personal transmission of musical wisdom. In the next chapter he re-examines the role of the Guru in the light of modern developments and says that when Pandit Paluskar liberated the magical transmission of the oral tradition, music could be sold for a price and was made into a commodity. The living Guru disappeared from the scene.

Bhakti runs through music like a silver thread, particularly in Carnatic

*In any Indian discipline, the guru or preceptor plays an important role and this is very pronounced in music. No gharana has any meaning without a guru embodying it vitally.*



music. The author says that this is missing in the Khyals of Hindustani music.

The seachange in the pattern of patronage to music has made a world of difference to the art and this is discussed in detail by the author in chapter 8. Native states provided a great measure of security to several giants who established gharanas. The All India Radio, which replaced the native states, had a profound impact on music. People could now hear the voices of great musicians through a wireless set. But the Radio brought a brand new discipline and music recitals became tighter in format.

The last and the longest chapter in the book is on the Sangeet Research Academy of Calcutta which began the practice of conducting an annual Sangeet Sammelan from 1971. The sponsors were the Indian Tobacco Company, a corporate giant. In 1978 the ITC established an institution called the Sangeet Research Academy which, little by little, became a Gurukula. It produced great singers like Ajoy Chakravarty. Later Vijay Kichlu was discovered and was made head of the Academy. He made the Academy a closely-knit family in an emotionally rich and integrated environment.

In addition to Ajoy Chakravarty, Rashid Khan became a star student of the Academy.

Menon has a fresh, racy style and the reader will be tempted to complete the book before putting it down. The glossary will be found highly useful by those who are not familiar with technical terms in music. The printing is elegant and the get up artistic.

T.S. Parthasarathy, fellow, Sangeet Natak Akademi and Secretary, Madras Music Academy, is a well-known musicologist and author of more than a dozen books on music and dance.

# A Foray Into A 'Position of Excellence'

Jayeeta Sharma

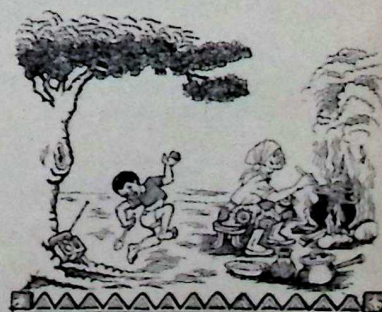
AFRICAN TALES FROM TENDAI'S GRANDMOTHER

By Lakshmi Mukundan

Tara Publishers, 1997, pp. 64, Rs. 70.00

This book comes as a worthy addition to the long tradition in which Just-So Stories would be one of the all-time exemplars, of using genres of folktale, animal fable and fireside stories to beguile and socialize the young. *African Tales* comprises stories from the Shona tribe of Zimbabwe dealing with the exploits of animals in their surrounding forests, as told to a small boy of the tribe by his grandmother. The clearly set out text as well as the black and white drawings, both from the versatile pen of Lakshmi Mukundan, form an enthralling whole for virtually any age-group of children. The child who has to be read aloud to can identify the baobab tree or grandmother's three-legged cooking pot and feel an active sense of participation in the exercise while older siblings would be devouring it on their own. Not to mention the accompanying parent who would surely be carried along with Tendai's counterparts in the excitement of discovering how the weaver birds reformed their layabout husbands or why the cheetah's claws are kept out as a badge of honour.

At the risk of sounding fulsome, one must assert that the most attractive part of this book, in addition to its many other virtues, is simply the production, excellent in every respect right down to







the virtual absence of proofing errors, because this precisely is the area where one is constantly assailed by books which display exactly the reverse, no matter what might be their other merits. A striking instance of the care that has gone into *African Tales* is the use of handmade paper throughout, which not only reinforces, subtly, the narrator's subtext of harmony with the world of nature, but also conveys con-

*Buttressing the tales themselves, there is a wealth of incidental detail about the lives of the people in southern Africa, about the canning factory where Tendai's parents work, how it is the white farmer who owns both the factory and the land, how he and his grandmother sell handmade lace and wild mushrooms to passing motorists, how the meat they eat is now no longer hunted from the forest but arrives from the butcher's shop.*

siderable aesthetic and tactile pleasure. An experience that is fairly infrequent in the shoddy works that many Indian publishers still seek to foist upon their child readers. The map of Africa that

has been provided along with the illustrations of animals and Shona tribespeople are a praiseworthy attempt at conveying the kind of vibrancy and verisimilitude which any work seeking to both entertain and inform certainly owes its audience. Thankfully, Africa here is not treated as the usual never-never land of story safari where half-clad 'natives' of undifferentiated provenance were the only exposure children used to be given to their counterparts on that continent. These stories are precisely sited in Zimbabwe, with the Shona grandmother's tales very apposite to the context of the lives in the narrative. The intrusion of tourists and motorcars into their rural surroundings sparks off her tales of how, like Tendai, Young Impala and Young Crocodile too were having to cope with new sorts of people and experiences.

Buttressing the tales themselves, there is a wealth of incidental detail about the lives of the people in southern Africa, about the canning factory where Tendai's parents work, how it is the white farmer who owns both the factory and the land, how he and his grandmother sell handmade lace and wild mushrooms to passing motorists, how the meat they eat is now no longer hunted from the forest but arrives from

the butcher's shop. This element of 'interest' in fact distinguishes this book from the two excellent volumes of African animal stories which the National Book Trust had published for India in 1993, originally brought out in New Zealand by David Bateman Ltd. Those stories, again an excellent addition to any child's library, were from different tribes and regions of the continent. While they provided us delightful 'bestly tales' and included, in addition, facts about each animal, some story detail there about the people of those areas could have enlivened matters further. The kind of insights given in such books not only serve as a 'fun' supplement to classroom themes but are a much needed antidote to stereotypes about Third World peoples which are all too prevalent otherwise, especially in older publications. And of course, for those of us who wish to widen our children's horizons further than English midnight feasts or American babysitters or their paler 'desi' clones, Mukundan and Tara Publishers will hopefully repeat their foray into what Mrs. Molesworth called "Positions of excellence", fairly soon.

Jayeeta Sharma teaches in Lady Sri Ram College, New Delhi.

## TECHNOLOGY, MARKET STRUCTURE AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Issues and Policies for Developing Countries

Nagesh Kumar & NS Siddharthan

This volume analyses the factors that contribute to the technological capability in developing countries and examines the implication these have on policy formation. Key areas covered include globalization and local capability, market structure and performance, multinational enterprises and technology imports.

0-415-16925-9

234 x 156

224 pp

UK Price : £ 45.00

Special Indian Price : TBA

Exclusively Distributed in India by;

T.R.PUBLICATIONS PVT LTD,  
PMG Complex, II Floor, 57, South Usman Road,  
CHENNAI 600 017

Tel : (044) 4340765 Fax : (044) 4348837  
e-mail : trgeetha@glasmd01.vsnl.net.in



## FORTHCOMING TITLES IN LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| McRae/LANGUAGE OF POETRY        | £ 9.99 |
| Sanger/LANGUAGE OF FICTION      | £ 8.99 |
| Goddard/LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISING | £ 8.99 |
| Beard/LANGUAGE OF SPORT         | £ 8.99 |
| Reah/LANGUAGE OF NEWSPAPERS     | £ 8.99 |
| Ross/LANGUAGE OF HUMOUR         | £ 8.99 |

Please Note : All the above titles will be available at special prices when published.

In case of difficulty please contact Area Manager;

R.SESHADRI, 32, Second Main Road, CIT East, CHENNAI 600 035  
Tel : (044) 4346244 Fax : (044) 4346529  
e-mail : ltpesha@glasmd01.vsnl.net.in

Showroom & Liaison office;  
T.RAMANUJAM, Sales Executive  
2/3 A, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, NEW DELHI 110 002  
Tel : (011) 3287554 Fax : (011) 3281373  
e-mail : ltprama@glasmd01.vsnl.net.in



# Communications

Dear Editor,

It was somewhat surprising to see a careful and humane scholar like Wagish Shukla declare that the Persian word *hindu* means "nigger". He also says that the term *hindu* came into use "when the invasions from central Asia othered the Indian population." (*The Book Review*, October 1997, p. 22).

Apart from the fact that there is no concept in Persian (or even Urdu) corresponding to the pejorative, inhuman concept underlying the English word nigger, another fact that we must remember is that *hindu* is a highly metaphorical expression in Persian. Since Wagish Shukla is not quite alone today in misunderstanding the connotations of the Persian word *hindu*, permit me to present its history and meaning in some detail.

The word is Arabic in origin: since at least the sixth century, Arabs have used *al-hind* to denote India, deriving the word from the name of the river, namely, *sindhu*. The sibilant 's' mutates to the aspirate 'h' in Arabic. The word-final *u* became mute, because in Arabic, the word-final vowel sound has semantic significance, and is governed by rules of grammar. That the sound wasn't entirely lost is shown by the fact that the Persian word for India is *hindustan*; other pronunciations of this word are *hindoostan* (the *oo* here represents the long *u* sound, as in the English *boot*), and *hindusan* (short *u*, as in the English *put*). When a noun or adjective in Persian takes the suffix—*-stan* (signifying "place" or "land"), the vowel sound that joins the two is most often a short *i*, thus: *afghan-i-stan* (land of the Afghan); *gul-i-stan* (place of flowers); *reg-i-stan* (land of sand, hence, desert), and so on. In case of *hindustan*, however, the joining vowel sound *i* was not needed, because the vowel sound *u* was already there. Turkish, borrowing the word from Persian, follows the native Persian rule, and says *hindustan*. These pronunciations also testify to the fact that Arabic and Persian recognize the word-final *u* sound in *sindhu*.

In Arabic, *hindi* meant, and even now means, "a person or thing of Indian origin; a native of India". Also, *al-hind* came to signify "the Indians". In Persian, the word *hind* was taken from the Arabic, to mean "India". Since it was known to the Iranians that the Arabic *al-hind* possessed a word-final *u* in the original tongue, they distinguished one *hind* from another by saying *hind* for "India", and *hindu* for "Indian".

The earliest Persian dictionary that I know for certain to have entered *hindu* is *Dastur ul Afazil* (1342). It gives *hinduan* [plural of *hindu*] and glosses it as "the inhabitants of Hind; and the name of a city". Speaking of dictionaries, I am reminded of the fact that the third oldest known dictionary of Persian, called *Sihah ul Furs* (1328) was composed by an Indian scholar called Muhammad bin Hindu Shah Nakhjuani. Had the word *hindu* been a pejorative, no one would ever have been called "Hindu Shah". (This also suggests that the occasional use, as we shall see below, of *hindu* to mean "thief/robber/slave" was a "literary", rather than everyday usage).

Persian is the most metaphorical of the languages that I know of. One of the reasons for this is the tendency of Persian speakers to think syntagmatically. Consider the following:

Since "hindu" means "Indian", and Indians are dark complexioned, and since most slaves were dark complexioned because they came from African countries, "hindu" came to mean "slave" (1).

Since darkness of complexion was an attribute of beauty, "hindu" came also to mean "beautiful person" or "beloved" (2).

Since "hindu" means "beloved", and beloveds are supposed to steal people's hearts, nor oblige people to give up their heart, the beloved began to be called a thief, or a robber; and since the word "hindu" also means "beloved", so it also acquired the meaning of "thief/robber" (3).

Since the beauty spot on the beloved's face is black, and Indians also are of dark colour, so "hindu" came to mean "beauty spot on the face" (4).

Since the beauty spot is believed to protect the beloved from the evil eye, "hindu" came to signify "watchman" (5).

Since Indian steel, especially swords, were world famous, and since "hindu" meant "Indian", it also took on the meaning of "sword" (6).

By transference, "hindu = sword", became "hindu = wielder of the sword, soldier" (7).

Since thieves and robbers operated mostly by night, and also often painted their faces black, or wore black masks, and Indians are dark of complexion, "hindu" came to mean "thief" or "robber" (8).

Since "beloved = thief, robber", and "hindu = thief, robber", so "hindu = beloved" (9).

Since lovers are apt to forsake conventional religion and respectability for the sake of the beloved, both lover and beloved are seen as "kafir" or "denier (of God), infidel"; and Indians are, by convention, unbelievers, so "hindu" came to denote "infidel", and also, "beloved" (10).

I cannot say that the above series exhausts all the meanings of the Persian word *hindu*: it does not in any case indicate the order in which the meanings arose in the language. I am not aware of any classical dictionary of Persian which defines *hindu* as "an adherent of the religion called Hinduism". Wagish Shukla himself cites the vast and authoritative *Farhang-e Anand Raj*, composed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century at Varanasi, and published in three volumes by Naval Kishor at Lucknow during 1889–94, to say that *hindu* means "inhabitant of India."

Wagish Shukla says that Khan-e Arzu (1689–1756) held that since "Hindu" is a special community, all inhabitants of India should not be called *hindu*: in the general sense, Indians should be called *hindi*, the appellative *hindu* being reserved for the adherents of the Hindu religion alone. It is true that Tek Chand Bahar, in his monumental Persian dictionary *Bahar-e Ajam* (1752), quotes Khan-e Arzu to the above effect. But Bahar himself seems to regard Khan-e Arzu's view as merely *ad hominem*, he makes no comment upon it, nor does he amend his own definition of *hindu* to agree with Khan-e Arzu's contention. No classical Persian lexicographer seems to have followed Khan-e Arzu in this position. Even Steingass, who is rather liberal in adducing definitions, has just this to say in his definition of *hindu*: "An Indian; black; a servant; a robber; an infidel; a watchman; a mole on the cheek of a mistress".

Wagish Shukla says that Khan-e Arzu "is the one who othered Persian-laden Urdu from Hindavi (the language of the Hindus)..." (p. 23). In describing Hindavi as the language of the Hindus, Shukla has, as we shall see in a moment, let himself be caught in Gilchrist's trap. As regards Khan-e Arzu, he did no such thing as "othering Persian-laden urdu". On the contrary, he was the first, and long before William Jones, to point out similarities between Sanskrit and Persian, suggesting a common origin for both. Khan-e Arzu was a linguist of extraordinary range and perception, and a Persianist. Apart from being friend and informal occasional adviser to a number of Urdu poets in Delhi, he had very little to do with Urdu (or Hindi, or Rekhta, as the language was then called).

As for "Persian-laden Urdu", there was no such thing in Khan-e Arzu's time. People whom history identifies as writing "Persian-laden Urdu" came a century and more later: typical examples are, much less than half of Ghalib's verse and prose, and about half of Abul Kalam Azad's prose.

Finally, I can't find myself in sympathy with Wagish Shukla's query, "Why should we not say that the Hindi-Urdu divide was created by, say, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who insisted that the Urdu language and the Perso-Arabic script were the 'identity' of Muslims?" (p. 23). Dr Shukla overlooks the fact the foundation of the Urdu-Hindi divide was laid at the College of Fort William, when Syed Ahmad Khan (1857–1898) wasn't even born. All of us should benefit from reading Tara Chand on this subject. I refer particularly to his *The Problem of Hindustani* (Allahabad, 1944). Also of great value is *Hindustani*, a small booklet in Urdu, consisting of the text of speeches on the subject commissioned and broadcast by the All India Radio, New Delhi, from February 20, 1939, to February 25, 1939. In addition to Tara Chand, the speeches of Brijmohan Dattatreya Kaifi and Dr Rajendra Prasad are particularly interesting, describing as they do the historical background of the problem, and the political perspective of the thirties. The book was published by Maktaba Jamia, New Delhi, shortly after the talks were broadcast.

Nearer our time are the writings of Francis Robinson: *Separatism Among the Indian Muslims* (Cambridge, 1974), and Christopher King: *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* OUP., Bombay, 1994). I would, however, like to go to the very source, and quote from John Gilchrist whom all of us know as the driving energy behind the teching of Urdu and Hindi at Fort William. In 1788, Gilchrist wrote a book called *The Oriental Linguist, An Easy and Familiar Introduction to The Hindoostanee, Or Grand Popular Language of Hindoostan (Vulgarly, But Improperly, Called The Moors)*. A second edition, "revised and altered", followed in 1802 (Calcutta, Printed by P. Ferris, at the Post Press). This is the edition that I have before me, and I quote from page i of the Introduction (italics as in the original, underlining emphasis mine):



"I may proceed to state-Hindoostan is a compound word, equivalent to *Hindoo-land*, or *Negro-land*, and too well known to require any description here. It is inhabited chiefly by Hindoos and Moosulmans; whom we may safely comprise, as well as their language, under the general, conciliating, comprehensive term of *Hindoostanee*, and which I have adopted for the above and following reasons.

"This name of the country being modern, as well as the vernacular tongue in question, no other appeared so appropriate, as it did to me, when I first engaged in the study and cultivation of the language. That the natives and others call it also *Hindee*, Indian, from *Hind*, the ancient appellation of India, cannot be denied; but as this is apt to be confounded with *Hinduwee*, *Hindoo*, *ee*, *Hindvee*, the derivative from *Hindoo*, I adhere to my general opinion, that we should invariably discard all other denominations of the popular speech of this country, including the unmeaning word *Moors*, and substitute for them *Hindoostanee*, whether the people here constantly do so or not: as they can hardly discriminate sufficiently, to observe the use and propriety of such restrictions, even when pointed out to them.

"*Hinduwee*, I have treated as the exclusive property of the Hindoos alone; and have therefore constantly applied it to the old language of India, which prevailed before the Moosulman invasion; and in fact now constitutes among them, the basis or groundwork of the *Hindoostanee*, a comparatively recent superstructure, composed of Arabic and Persian, in which the two last may be considered in the same relation, that Latin and French bear to English: while we may justly treat the *Hinduwee* of the modern speech or *Hindoostanee*, as the Saxon of the former, thus:

SAXON.  
LATIN.  
FRENCH.  
ENGLISH.  
HINDUWEE.  
ARABIC.  
PERSIAN.  
HINDOOSTANEE."

I quote Gilchrist at such length so as to bring out his argument in its entirety, and also to reassure your readers that I am not misrepresenting Gilchrist by compressing his text.

Apart from the absurdity of the historical philology equating "*Hinduwee*" with Saxon, and assigning the same place to Arabic and Persian in relation to "*Hindoostanee*" which Latin and French putatively occupy in relation to English, two things stand out: Gilchrist's naive but imperialistic arrogance in appropriating for himself the role of lawgiver and mentor to the natives, who don't know what is good for themselves, and his anxiety to deny to Urdu (then almost universally called Hindi, as Gilchrist himself testifies), its place as the premier language of the Indian people, and confine it to the Muslims alone. Having himself said that there is but one language spoken by both Hindus and Muslims, and that "the natives and others" call it "*Hindi*", and that "*Hinduwee*" is "the exclusive property of the Hindoos alone". Poor Gilchrist would have been quite unhappy, though perhaps not abashed, to learn that the Urdu poet Mushafi (1750-1824) wrote in his third Divan, compiled around 1785:

Mushafi, put away Persian,  
Now the vogue is for Hinduvi verse.

So much for "*Hinduwee*" being the "exclusive property" of the Muslims. In an earlier work, Gilchrist had already attested the all India character of "*Hindi*", which he named "*Hindoostanee*", but which had also, by that time, begun to be called "*Urdu*". In his *A Grammar of The Hindoostanee Language, Or Part Third of Volume First, Of A System Of Hindoostanee Philology* (Calcutta, 1796, at the Chronicle Press), he devoted Chapter 9 to Prosody, and said that he would illustrate his argument by quoting "a few specimens from various sorts of verse used by the best poets, who have composed their several works in that mixed Dialect, also called OOrdo" or the polished language of the Court, and which even at this day pervades the vast provinces of a once powerful empire" (p. 261).

I don't think I need to say much more now. The fact that most of us—even Urdu scholars—constantly put out of our minds is the peculiarity of nomenclature: Writing around 1220, Muhammad Auli said that Masud Sa'd Salman (1046-1126) composed a whole Divan in *hind(u)vi*. Khusrau, writing in 1294, spoke of Masud Sa'd Salman's *hindi* or *hind(u)vi* Divan (the extant mss seem to exchange one freely for the other). He himself, he says, has composed, for the delectation of his friends, "a few quires' worth of poems" in *hindi*. In 1318-19, writing a long poem in praise of India, Khusrau distinguishes the "language of Delhi and its environs" from

"Lahori" [Panjabi] and "Avad" [Avadhi].

Early Sufi poets, using the language in Gujarat in the 1420's, called it "*Dihlavi*", "*Hindi*", and then "*Gujri*". Around the same time, there is literary activity in the language in the Deccan, where it is described as *Gujri*, *Hindi*, and *Dakani*. In the north, the language is called *Hindi*, and *Rekhta*. Finally, in the 1780's, the word *Urdu* appears as language name. This name has nothing to do with armies, or army camps, or camp-markets, as even Urdu scholars tend to suppose. Actually, *Urdu* is the shortened form of *urdu-e mu'alla-e Shahjahanabad*, (the exalted city of Shahjahanabad), and by the end of the seventeenth century, the word "*urdu*" had come to mean just "the walled city of Shahjahanabad". This meaning persisted well into the nineteenth century: in 1807, we find Insha Allah Khan (author of *Ras Ketki ki Kahani*, a prose romance in which he eschewed all words of Arabic or Persian origin) using the word "*urdu*" to mean "the city of Shahjahanabad".

Khan-e Arzu, writing around 1750, declared that Persian was "the language of the *Urdu-e mu'alla*" [that is, the walled city]. Hindi, or *Rekhta*, was however far catching up with Persian, even among the Hindu and Muslim elite. In January 1771, Shah Alam II occupied the Red Fort at Delhi for the first time since his coronation, in Bihar, in 1759. Shah Alam was well versed in Sanskrit, and was a substantial writer of prose and verse in Hindi. Also, by virtue of his long stay in the east, where Persian was not so prevalent as in Delhi, he and his entourage seem to have conducted informal conversations in Hindi. Delhi's elite soon followed suit, and Hindi quickly replaced Persian as the *zaban-e urdu-e mu'alla-e Shahjahanabad* (language of the exalted city/Court of Shahjahanabad). This soon got shortened to *zaban-e urdu-e mu'alla*, then to *zaban-e urdu*, and finally, by the 1780's, to plain *urdu*. In English, it became Urdu with a capital U. Except for the British, and some French, there were no foreign armies in India at that time. The question, therefore, of the name "*Urdu*" having been given to the language because of any military association, does not arise.

Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Allahabad

#### 'Prasad on Damodaran'

I've been irked by H.Y.S. Prasad's ambiguous review of A.K. Damodaran's expedient addition to Nehruviana (*TBR*, November 1997). I do not agree with the view held by Damodaran or Prasad that by 1942 Gandhi was to describe Nehru as his "legal heir" and remark: "I know this that when I am gone, he will speak my language". If you go through the correspondence between Motilal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi in 1927 on the question of Jawaharlal's suggested "coronation" as Congress President, you learn that the younger Nehru had become Gandhi's "child-in-politics", his confidante and heir in the twenties itself and that by 1928 he had completely learnt to "speak" Gandhi's language. I'd like to add here that Jawaharlal Nehru was never a "Hamlet" as Subhas Bose thought he was. He was a professional politician and he knew quite early what he should do in politics. I doubt if the younger Nehru seriously differed with the Mahatma even once after 1928. The Mahatma offered the Congress mantle to Nehru in 1929 almost on a platter and the two ran the party for the rest of the freedom movement. The Congress has been a Private Limited Company, a one-man show, a remote-controlled system from 1920 to 1997, from M.K. Gandhi to S.R. Kesri. It has been an organisation directly controlled or remote-controlled by Gandhi or by the Nehrus since the Nagpur session in December 1920.

The Damodaran-Prasad duo is also guilty of an untruth. The Congress rejection of the League's offer of co-operation in forming governments in UP and Bombay was the decision of the younger Nehru with the tacit endorsement of the Mahatma. Besides, Subhas Bose was not Congress President in 1937. He had not yet returned from his prolonged stay in Europe. Had he been in India, he would have fought for co-operation with Jinnah in order to avoid any further estrangement between the League and the Congress. Bose was the only leader who had the requisite foresight to have an effective arrangement with the League so as to practically demonstrate that Hindus and Muslims could work together and fight for the freedom of a united India. Had Bose survived in the Congress, he could have avoided the cataclysmic eventuality of partition.

R.S. Sharma, Professor of English, NEHU, Shillong



## BOOK NEWS

## BOOK NEWS

## BOOK NEWS

## BOOK NEWS

## BOOK NEWS

## BOOK NEWS

## ■ BIOGRAPHY

*The Biographical Dictionary of Greater India*

Edited by Henry Scholberg  
These are biographical sketches of the men and women who made Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka what they are today. It relates the panorama of a great sub-continent as mirrored in the lives of the men and women who played a part in its history.  
Promilla & Co., New Delhi, 1998, pp. 406, Rs. 950.00

*Simply Scandalous: Meena Kumari*  
Mohan Deep

The life story of one of the greats of Indian cinema, the life she lived and a glimpse of the cinema of her time chronicled by a journalist who had earlier written a biography of Madhubala.  
Image Books, 1998, pp. 266, Rs. 200.00

## ■ CULTURE

*Musical Instruments of North India: Eighteenth Century Portraits* by Baltazard Solvyns

Robert L. Hardgrave Jr. and Stephen M. Slawek  
The Flemish artist Baltazard Solvyns residing in Calcutta from 1791 till 1804 produced a remarkable series of etchings depicting the people and culture he observed. First published in Calcutta in 1796 and 1799 these include portrayals of 36 musical instruments as well as prints of nautch and Hindu dancing girls. Here the prints are reproduced together with Solvyn's descriptive text.  
Manohar Books, 1997, pp. 153, Rs. 475.00

*Ananya: A Portrait of India*

Edited by S.N. Sridhar and Nirmal K. Mattoo  
In *Ananya* forty of the world's most distinguished experts on India introduce India's past and present, each chapter presents the highlights of one aspect of Indian civilization and both traditional and contemporary India are covered.  
The Association of Indians in America, USA, 1997, pp. 910, \$79.95

## ■ ECOLOGY

*Ecology, Climate and Empire: The Indian Legacy in Global Environmental History 1400-1940*

Richard H. Grove  
Far from being a modern phenomenon Grove traces the origins of present day environmental debates about soil erosion, deforestation and climate change in the writings of early colonial administrators, doctors and missionaries.  
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 237, Rs. 395.00

*Cheetal Walk: Living in the Wilderness*  
E.R.C. Davidar

'Cheetal Walk' is the house built in the jungles at the foot of the Nilgiri hills by the noted conservationist E.R.C. Davidar. This book tells the story of that jungle dwelling and in so doing sketches the ecological changes in one of the most wildlife rich areas of the subcontinent and sheds light on the conservation efforts of one of the oldest Indian voluntary organizations, the Nilgiri Wildlife Association.  
Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 208, Rs. 395.00

*Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia*

Edited by Richard H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran, Satpal Sangwan  
Discussing diverse aspects of the environmental history of South and Southeast Asia from a variety of perspectives this volume brings together leading experts from the fields of history, history of science, archaeology, geography and environmental studies and covers a timespan from 50,000 BC to the present.  
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 1036, Rs. 1250.00

## ■ EDUCATION

*Education, Development and Underdevelopment*

Edited by Sureshchandra Shukla and Rekha Kaul  
The contributors to this volume maintain that while education certainly has the potential for human advancement, the ground reality is that this is not true for all and not equally for different groups in a given society. A number of facets of the relationship between education, development and underdevelopment in the Indian context are studied with emphasis on the consequences of colonial policy for education, paradox of brain drain, persisting inequalities in education, constraints in educating the poor and the marginalised etc.  
Sage Publications, 1998, pp. 308, Rs. 395.00

*Learning and Freedom: Policy, Pedagogy and Paradigms in Indian Education and Schooling*

John Robert Shotton  
Using the most recent data on educational access, achievement, quality and equity the author examines issues such as the unequal structure of opportunity and the nature of the existing learning system which discourages the development of collective and personal freedom. He outlines the philosophical and practical underpinnings of a possible new paradigm which he conceives of as a learner-centred pedagogy guided by a more community based, sociable approach.

Sage Publications, 1998 p. 209, Rs. 295.00

## ■ GENERAL

*Jewel in the Lotus: Deeper Aspects of Hinduism*

Mumtaz Ali  
Equally comfortable with the Gita and the Quran the author strongly asserts that one has to live like the lotus, which while growing in water and deriving its nourishment from it still does not let water wet its petals.  
Sterling Paperbacks, 1997, pp. 161, Rs. 90.00

*Bangalore: The Story of a City*

Maya Jayapal  
The book traces the city's growth from a small mud fort built by Kempe Gowda and discusses some of the diverse elements that have helped to make it the cosmopolitan city it now is.  
East-West Books, Madras, 1997, pp. 278, Rs. 250.00

*Khajuraho*

Part of the 'Classic India' series this book is a visual delight showing the perfect fusion of architecture and sculpture that the temples of Khajuraho are.  
Rupa & Co., 1997, pp. 56, price not mentioned.

*Vedantic Way of Living*

Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha  
In this book the author deals with the essentials of *Karmayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga*, *Jnanayoga* and *Dhyanayoga*. Revealing how all these paths are beautifully harmonized in the comprehensive canvas of Vedanta, he finally unfolds before the reader 'The Right Way of Living'.  
Sterling Paperbacks, 1997, pp. 135, Rs. 50.00

## ■ GENDER STUDIES

*Gender, Kinship and Property Rights: Nagarattar Womanhood in South India*

Yuko Nishimura  
This ethnographic account of a prominent mercantile caste in Tamil Nadu provides a contemporary gendered perspective to the subject. Nishimura describes how the status of married women is protected by women's property rights and the kinship oriented system based on cross cousin marriage.  
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 343, Rs. 495.00

*Women Travellers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze*

Indira Ghose  
By focusing on nineteenth century British women travellers in India Ghose argues that women's perception of the Other is certainly different from men's. What emerges from the tales of these often unconventional and spirited

women is how the Other always serves as a mirror for the self revealing more about the culture they themselves belong to rather than the one that they are trying to describe.  
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 196, Rs. 350.00

*Sita Must Live: The Role of Women in Society*

M. Lakshmikumari  
This book is a compilation of selected editorials penned by the author in Vivekananda Kendra's magazine *Yuva Bharati*, projecting her insights into the uniqueness of Indian womanhood often repeated by Swami Vivekananda.  
Sterling Paperbacks, 1997, pp. 90, Rs. 60.00

*Feminizing Political Discourse: Women and the Novel in India 1857-1905*

Jasbir Jain  
This book views literature as a cultural construct which reflects the socio-political concerns of the age. It focuses on the centrality of the women's characters and connects it with the imperial colonial encounter which placed Indian culture within effeminate constructs.  
Rawat Publications, 1997, pp. 235, Rs. 350.00

*Empowerment of Women Through Distance Education*

P. Vijaylakshmi Pandit  
In this volume the case study of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University is examined in the perspective of education for women's empowerment.  
Booklinks Corporation, Hyderabad, 1997, pp. 211, Rs. 250.00

## ■ LITERATURE/FICTION

*Basanti*

Bhisham Sahni  
The story of a low caste teenaged girl brought up in one of Delhi's numerous ever-insecure bastis. In a resolution that is moving and dignified she demonstrates her firm grip on life as well as her quick ripening into a mature being unlikely to be deluded by myths of class, caste, love-marriage and the welfare state. Translated from the original Hindi by Jaidev.  
Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1997, pp. 175, Rs. 180.00

*Ghalib: The Poet and his Age*

Edited by Ralph Russell  
Ghalib (1797-1869) nobleman, wit, poet and litterateur was the last great literary figure produced by Mughal India before the empire was swept away by the British. The papers in this volume present aspects of the man, the poet and his age as they appear through the eyes of eminent scholars.  
Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 131, Rs. 195.00



## New from Oxford

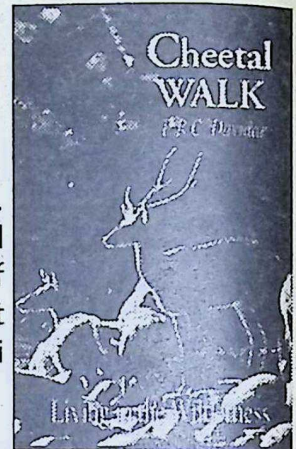
### Cheetal Walk

Living in the Wilderness

E.R.C. Davidar

'Cheetal Walk' is the house built in the jungles at the foot of the Nilgiri hills by the author. This book tells the story of that jungle dwelling. In doing so, it sketches the ecological changes in one of the most wildlife-rich areas of the subcontinent, analyses the impact of modernization on the inhabitants of the Nilgiris, both people and animals, and sheds light on the conservation efforts of one of the oldest Indian voluntary organizations, the Nilgiri Wildlife Association.

0 19 564145 0    1997    215 X 140 mm    236 pp.    Rs 395



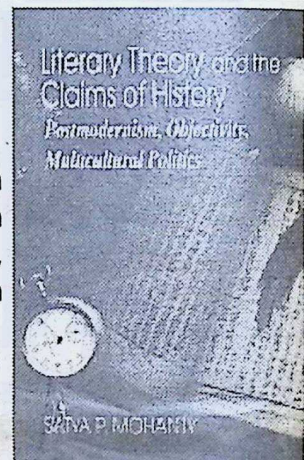
### Literary Theory and the Claims of History

Postmodernism, Objectivity, Multicultural Politics

Satya P. Mohanty

This book provides a critical account of postmodernist theory and points the way toward an alternative to the epistemological and cultural relativisms that are now so central to both the humanities and the social sciences. Drawing on detailed analyses of reference, interpretation, and the nature of value. The author defends a 'postpositivist realist' conception of objectivity as a legitimate ideal of enquiry.

0 19 564431 X    1997    215x140 mm    276 pp.    Rs 395

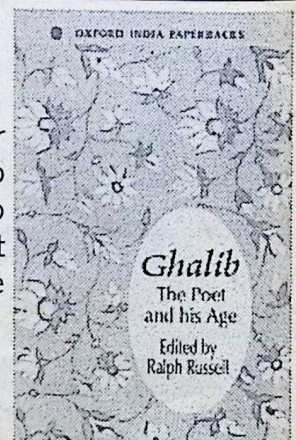


### Ghalib: The Poet and his Age

Ralph Russell (editor)

The papers in this volume present aspects of the man, the poet and his age as they appear through the eyes of eminent scholars. This book was originally published as a contribution to the celebrations of the centenary of Ghalib's death in 1969 and is now being reissued to mark the two hundredth anniversary of his birth. The aim is to make Ghalib accessible to that large audience which is aware of his greatness but can approach him only through the medium of English.

0 19 564363 1    1997    215 x 140 mm    144 pp.    Rs 195



### Varieties of Environmentalism

Essays North and South

Ramachandra Guha / Juan Martinez-Alier

In *Varieties of Environmentalism*, Guha and Martinez-Alier seek to articulate the values and orientation of the environmentalism of the poor, and to explore the conflicting priorities of South and North that were so dramatically highlighted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Essays on the 'ecology of Affluence' are also included.

0 19 564317 8    1997    215 x 140 mm    256 pp.    Rs 395



## Oxford University Press

♦ Lucknow ♦ Bangalore ♦ Pune  
♦ Patna ♦ Hyderabad ♦ Guwahati

Calcutta: 5 Lala Lajpat Rai Sarani, Calcutta 700020  
Chennai: Oxford House, 219 Anna Salai, Chennai 600006  
Delhi: 2/11 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002  
Mumbai: Oxford House, Apollo Bunder, Mumbai 400001



# THE BOOK REVIEW

VOLUME XXII NUMBER 5 MAY 1998



K.R. NARAYANAN  
*Nehru's Vision of India and the World—Then and Now . . . 4*

ROMILA THAPAR  
*Contextualizing Narrative Art . . . 8*

AMIYA P. SEN  
*Contextualizing a Very 'Modern Man' . . . 9*

C.P. CHANDRASEKHAR  
*On Redefining Development Economics . . . 16*

ASHOK V. DESAI  
*A Grandstand View of Economic History . . . 18*

VASANTH KANNABIRAN  
*Sir, Our Country Has a Tradition . . . 19*

ASHOK KELKAR  
*A Wise Policy is a Well-Informed Policy . . . 29*

HARISH TRIVEDI  
*The Case of the Missing Mussulman . . . 31*



# Contents

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |    |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| K. R. Narayanan    | <i>Nehru's Vision of India and the World—Then and Now</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 4  |
| Romila Thapar      | <i>Discourse in Early Buddhist Art: Visual Narratives of India</i> by Vidya Dehejia                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 8  |
| Amiya P. Sen       | <i>Swami Vivekananda and the Modernization of Hinduism</i> edited by William Radice                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 9  |
| Seema Alavi        | <i>Lucknow: Memories of a City</i> edited by Violette Graff; <i>Awadh Under the Nawabs: Politics, Culture and Communal Relations 1722–1856</i> edited by Surendra Mohan; <i>The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in 18th Century India</i> edited by Percival Spear | 12 |
| Sunil Dasgupta     | <i>Reflections on Partition in the East</i> edited by Ranabir Samaddar                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 13 |
| C.P. Chandrasekhar | <i>Analytical Development Economics: The Less Developed Economy Revisited</i> by Kaushik Basu                                                                                                                                                                                        | 16 |
| Ashok V. Desai     | <i>Colonialism, Property and the State</i> by Dharma Kumar                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 18 |
| Vasanth Kannabiran | <i>Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition</i> by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin                                                                                                                                                                                             | 19 |
| Nandini Chandra    | <i>Loved and Unloved: The Girl Child in the Family</i> edited by Jasodhara Bagchi, Jaba Guha and Piyali Sengupta                                                                                                                                                                     | 20 |
| Saraswati Haider   | <i>Poverty, Policy and Politics in Madras Slums: Dynamics of Survival, Gender and Leadership</i> by Joop W. de Wit                                                                                                                                                                   | 24 |
| Vinod K. Tiwari    | <i>Indian Medium Towns: An Appraisal of Their Role as Growth Centres</i> edited by Jayamala Diddee                                                                                                                                                                                   | 25 |
| N.S. Jagannathan   | <i>If You Ask Me...</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 27 |
| Stephen Moss       | <i>Letter from London</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 28 |
| Ashok R. Kelkar    | <i>Languages of Tribal and Indigenous Peoples of India: The Ethnic Space</i> edited by Anvita Abbi                                                                                                                                                                                   | 29 |
| Harish Trivedi     | <i>Daastan-e-Laapata (The Tale of the Missing Person) A Novel in Hindi</i> by Manzoor Ehtesham                                                                                                                                                                                       | 30 |
| Turai Muralidhar   | <i>The Press and Telugu Literature</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 31 |
| Dhananjay Kapse    | <i>Jane Austen: An Anthology of Recent Criticism</i> edited by Harish Trivedi                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 32 |
| Feisal Alkazi      | <i>Into India</i> edited by Sally Moss; <i>Raining Surprises: Henry in India</i> edited by Julia Fraser; <i>Exploring India: Teacher's Resource Book</i>                                                                                                                             | 33 |
| Sanjoy Hazarika    | <i>A Book Store with a View</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 35 |
|                    | <b>Books-in-Brief</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 36 |
|                    | <b>Book News</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 37 |
|                    | Cover: Background: Detail of 'Descent at Sankissa'. Foreground: 'Nalagiri Legend', continuous narrative. From <i>Discourse in Early Buddhist Art: Visual Narratives of India</i> by Vidya Dehejia, published by Munshiram Manoharlal                                                 |    |

Editors: Chandra Chari Uma Iyengar  
Assistant Editor: Preeti Gill

## Editorial Advisory Board:

K.R. Narayanan S. Gopal Raja Ramanna Nikhil Chakravarty N.S. Jagannathan Narayani Gupta Romila Thapar  
Meenakshi Mukherjee K.N. Raj V.P. Dutt Mrinal Pande Tejeshwar Singh Chitra Narayanan Ashok Vajpeyi Pulin Nayak

## Design and Layout

Tulika Print Communication Services  
35A/1 (second floor), Shahpur Jat  
(near Asiad Village), New Delhi 110 049  
Telephones 649 7999, 649 1448

## Subscription Rates 1998

Single Issue: Rs 25.00  
Annual Subscription (12 Issues)  
Individual: Rs 250.00 / \$40.00 / £25.00  
Institutional: Rs 300.00 / \$60.00 / £35.00  
(Inclusive of bank charges and postage)  
Life Donors: Rs 5000.00 and above

## Please address all mail to:

Post Box No. 5247, Chanakyapuri  
New Delhi 110 021  
Registered mail should be sent **only** to  
23 Vasant Enclave, New Delhi 110057  
Telephone: 614 4805, 614 2031  
Tel + Fax: 91-35 5500

The Book Review is a non-political, ideologically non-partisan journal which tries to reflect all shades of intellectual opinions and ideas. The views of the reviewers and authors writing for the journal are their own.

All reviews and articles published in The Book Review are exclusive to the journal and may not be reprinted without the prior permission of the editor.

Published by Chandra Chari for The Book Review Literary Trust, 239 Vasant Enclave, New Delhi 110 057. Typeset at Tulika Print Communication Services Pvt.Ltd., 35 A/1, Shahpur Jat, New Delhi 110 049. Printed at Pauls Press, E 44/11 Okhla Phase II, New Delhi 110 020.



## T.C.A. Ramanujachari

15 November 1915—30 March 1998



We go to the press with this issue of *The Book Review* with a heavy heart. In the early hours of Monday, March 30, 1998, Shri T.C.A. Ramanuja Chari, founding father of The Book Review Literary Trust and father of Chandra Chari passed away.

For over twenty-two years he was a source of encouragement and advice for *The Book Review* but it was in 1989 when we were at the crossroads of survival that Shri Ramanuja Chari evolved the concept of The Book Review Literary Trust. He conceived a Trust that had vision beyond *The Book Review*, encompassing literary, intellectual and publishing activities well into the 21st century. He translated his vision into a Deed that is the fulcrum upon which all the activities of the Literary Trust stand today.

Shri Ramanuja Chari was of a liberal bent of mind. A Gold Medalist in Philosophy, he taught in Madras Christian College and came to the notice of the Professor David Hogg who arranged for him to study at Oxford. Tragically he was unable to raise the then enormous sum of Rs. 1,000.00 required and could not proceed to Oxford. It was therefore with great happiness that he was able to see his two grand-daughters and a grandson fulfill his dream.

After practising Law in Madras from 1941–1948 Shri Ramanuja Chari joined the IAS in 1948. He was Deputy Commissioner in Amravati and was deeply involved in Pandit Nehru's development programmes with people's participation. With the reorganization of the States in 1956, he moved to Madhya Pradesh and served as Deputy Commissioner, Raigarh and Director of Tribal Welfare, Raipur. Moving to Delhi to the Home Ministry he became Secretary of the Santhanam Committee on Vigilance and was the first to incorporate the Ombudsman concept. Returning to Madhya Pradesh he was Additional Commissioner Jabalpur, Health Secretary, Home Secretary, and Secretary to the Administrative Reforms Commission. In 1975 he retired as Member of the Board of Revenue, Gwalior.

A legal expert with a formidable knowledge of constitutional law and an administrator, Shri Ramanuja Chari was also an educationist. As adviser to the Scindia family from 1976 onwards and on the Board of Governors of the Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya, Gwalior, he was deeply involved with the management of the school.

Above all Shri Ramanuja Chari inculcated in all those who came close to him a sense of responsibility to contribute to society and deep sense of social values. On behalf of all those associated with *The Book Review* and The Book Review Literary Trust, we remember with deep gratitude Shri Ramanuja Chari without whom the survival of *The Book Review* would not have been possible.

Chitra Narayanan

A gentleman, it is said, is one who gives more than he receives from society. Mr. Ramanujachari was a gentleman, but this was not the measure of him, for he found so much in life that the giving would have overwhelmed a lesser man. At the age of 82, impatient of his handwriting, he mastered the use of a word-processor; a simple enough task for him, undaunted by the stories of other's struggles against the Machine. This small victory summed up his outlook; he had a zest for life. It is a tired phrase, but, in Mr. Ramanujachari's case, razor-apt. In a world where young men and women act as if there is no tomorrow and everything must be acquired and achieved today, Mr. Ramanujachari behaved as if tomorrow was forever. He moved to his own rhythm—unhurried, but intense, finding a richness in life that gave the lie to his physical ailments. Indeed, those weaknesses only made the victory, when it came, all the more sweet. And the victory always came—for, above all, he was a perfectionist—impatient of bad manners, in an age in which grace is a social solecism, and dismissive of shoddy work. He loved craft and artistry, and he sought these out and found them—in the cut of the cloth, in his superbly insouciant posture as he leaned on his walking stick and most especially in his writing. His was the culture of inter-relationships, between humans and their world. Be it cricket, shoes, a new dish, politics or the purchase of a car, the pros and cons had to be debated with verve—whether with a young person of twenty or a mature sixty-two. But there was no cynicism or intolerance in him—only a desire to see those around him reach the limits of their abilities.

It is said that the support of one's spouse gives one the confidence to stride the universe. This he received in abundance from his partner of 57 years. Justifiably impatient with his involvement with everyone and everything out of concern for his health, she was with him and for him always. Together, they set an example of grace and continuity that served as a touchstone for all those who knew them.

Mr. Ramanujachari loved cricket, and it is with a tribute to a cricketer that I invoke his memory:

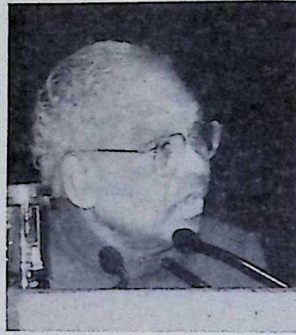
Dead, and from death a myriad memories arise,  
Deathless, we thank you, friend, that once you lived.

Shri Ramanujachari



# Nehru's Vision of India and the World—Then and Now\*

K.R. Narayanan



I am immensely honoured to have been asked to give this Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture. I feel very humble to speak about a man who was the liberator of India and one of the liberators of the world and one to whom I was personally obligated.

He had an integrated vision of India and the world. He wanted to revive the ancient glory of India in a modern form and to eliminate poverty, ignorance and disease from this country and to introduce science and technology, prosperity and progress to millions of its people. His dream was to eliminate inequalities and injustices of this age-old society and to give it a modern form and significance. He had a sense of mission for India, a mission of peace and liberation. He was attracted by Vivekananda's ideal of unity and strength for his country and by the ringing declaration of Vivekananda when he said that our isolation from all other nations of the world is the cause of our degradation and its only remedy is in getting back to the current of the rest of the world. Thus, the unity and strength of India and being in the mainstream of the developments of the world were integrated in his thinking and his actions.

As early as 1927, he sent a Report to the AICC after the International Congress against Colonialism and Imperialism in Brussels, about the future in

India of its policies. He spelt out in this his vision of the future of Indian unity, the way he wanted to deal with its minorities problem, the future economic structure, the social problems and the foreign affairs of independent India. It was an audacious exercise, the first of its kind. All that followed was an elaboration, intensification and integration of these four questions into a coherent whole and into a philosophy of action.

For India, his vision was dominated by the need for unity and independence. The unity of India was a dream that haunted him throughout his life. He was obsessed at that time as all Indian nationalists were, with the British view of Indian unity spelt out by Mrs. Strachey in 1888 that there is not and there was never an India possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity—physical, political, social, or religious. Western perceptions of India, more or less, followed this original view propounded by the British. Much later, after India's independence, a Yugoslav scholar Milovan Djilas said, "Despite my sympathy for India, I am not convinced that it can remain united in the long run." Another intellectual, one of the assistants of President Eisenhower wrote in a futuristic piece, that "the avowedly democratic society of India may be reasonably counted upon not to unify but to fragment, probably into as many parts as Western Europe." Richard Nixon on his book *Leaders* marvelled at the powerful personality of Jawaharlal Nehru who could hold together India during its critical years

and maintain it as a single nation. But he also believed that India could have been a nation of as many countries as Europe and he expressed the view that it might have been good for the unifiers to keep India as one, but it was probably not good for the people of India.

I am not sure if in the glorious privacy of their minds the strategic thinkers of western countries do not think more or less in the same terms about the future of India. America seems to have swallowed wholesale the British view, and the assessment of China is not known, but I recollect one sentence that Premier Chou en Lai said during the Bangladesh war—he characterized the fall of Dhaka not as "a victory for India but as a beginning of a conflagration which would ultimately consume the whole subcontinent."

Jawaharlal Nehru's dream of Indian unity in this context is a vision of great significance for us and the world. Like Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel, he was one of those who made Indian unity firm and unassailable. The concept of unity in diversity was too mystic for outsiders to grasp or to understand. The multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-political pluralism of Indian life and society, to my mind is a forerunner of the multipolar pluralism that is taking shape today in the world. It was this fact that Jawaharlal Nehru proclaimed in regard to India and also of the world.

The idea of unity was something of a floating dream throughout Indian history. The Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and British Empires in India had given

to this dream of unity, a cultural, spiritual, administrative or military shape. But Mahatma Gandhi gave to the concept the immense unity of the human mind; Sardar Patel consolidated the administrative and territorial unity. It was Jawaharlal Nehru who gave Indian unity a profound and concrete economic and emotional content. The Five Year Plans that he formulated introduced a pattern of development, unity to the whole of India and a certain economic interdependence of the different parts of India, perhaps for the first time in our long history. To this he added the concept of a casteless, classless society that was egalitarian and socialistic in its orientation. He invested it with harmony and a sense of emotional unity. He gave to this vision a form which was unprecedented in the history of India and all this was encompassed in the framework of democracy with this luxuriant pluralism of Indian life.

He was a prophet of the mixed economy in India and the world. The economic content that he gave to the fact and the vision of Indian unity was spelt out by him very clearly in the Five Year plan documents. In his Preface to the Third Plan he wrote, "In the last analysis, economic development is but a means to an end—the building up through effort and sacrifice, widely shared, of a society without caste, class or privilege which offers to every section of the community and to all parts of the country, the fullest opportunity to grow and contribute to the national well-being". Again he wrote, "It is neither necessary nor desirable that the economy should become a monolithic type of organisation offering little scope for experimentation either as to form or as to modes of functioning".

Today there is a tendency to look upon the economic system, the mixed economy that Nehru operated, as something of a rigid, almost totalitarian system from which we have had to depart in the modern era of liberalisation. But that was not his concept of mixed economy. It was not a mixture which was rigidly set but was to vary according to circumstances, to the stage of technology. And if the bureaucratic deformation of this mixed economy has affected initiative and enterprise in our system, it is not that there was something basically faulty with Nehru's vision of the Indian economic system. It is because we could not or we did not adapt to changing circumstances or changing technological stages of society.

He had integrally related this conception of the economy and the domestic set up of India to his vision of the world, to his foreign policy. And this

\* Text of the 29th Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture delivered by the President of India, Shri K.R. Narayanan on 13.11.1997. Printed with the consent of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.



had stated clearly again in the Third Five Year Plan in a chapter written by himself. He said, "In the larger context of the world, realisation of this objective for India as for other countries is intimately tied up with and dependent on the maintenance of peace. Peace, therefore, becomes of paramount importance and an essential prerequisite for national progress." This is how almost naturally, spontaneously, he made the transition from domestic preoccupations to preoccupations with larger foreign policy. But however much he was preoccupied with the world and with foreign policy objectives, he knew and said that very clearly, India was his basic consideration. As early as 1942, he said at a press conference. "But, ultimately, naturally I have to judge any question from the Indian point of view. If India perishes I must say selflessly, if you like to call it, it does not do me any good if other nations survived."

His world outlook was therefore India-oriented and again I would like to refer to his 1927 report. He linked India to the wider struggle, the anti-imperialist struggle that was going on in the world and he remarked that we must understand world movements and policies and fashion our movement accordingly.

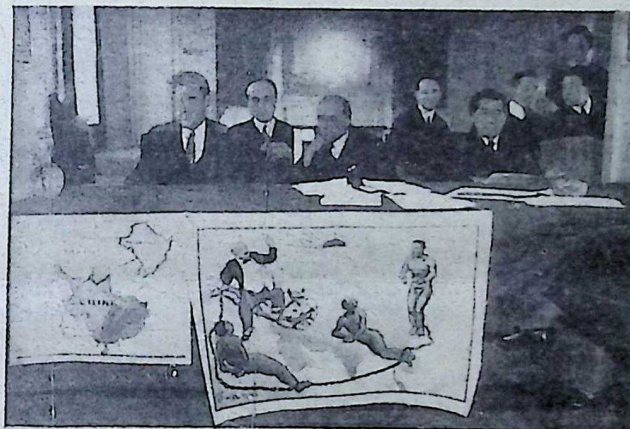
The vision of One World had dawned upon him and he asserted that in the One World of his dream he would give up a measure of freedom of action to an international body of which India would be an equal member, but she will do so if other countries agreed to limit their sovereignty in like measure. It is interesting that this very thought was articulated by Mahatma Gandhi in very telling terms. Gandhiji said once, "My service of India includes the service of humanity. Isolated independence is not the goal. It is voluntary inter-dependence. The better minds of the world desire today not absolutely independent states but a federation of friendly interdependent states. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting independence". This is a statement pregnant with meaning even today. Gandhiji wanted the ability to be totally independent without necessarily always asserting that independence. This is something we ought to remember in the present opening up system if this ability to be independent is crippled or constricted then we would have lost something basic. It is not necessary for us to always assert our independence but we must retain as a precious thing the ability to be independent. This was the crux of Nehru's One World vision.

From the interplay between nationalism and internationalism was born

Nehru's policy of Nonalignment and peaceful coexistence. He stated several times that in spite of the conflicts and divisions in the world, the world is moving towards alignments, groupings and attempts by certain groupings at dominating the world. As early as 1927, he sensed this trend and said that the United States may some day develop a kind of imperialism, that Britain might join with the United States in a powerful Anglo-Saxon bloc. He also feared that even the Soviet Union might develop a new type of imperialism. In 1940, he wrote in an article that if the idea of a World Federation did not materialize, there might emerge a colossal grouping of nations, with a danger of big wars. Later, sitting in the solitude of Ahmednagar Jail he wrote

transcending geography, reaching out into the minds of peace-loving people everywhere.

One of the greatest contributions of Jawaharlal Nehru to the world was the precious gift of Nonalignment that he gave to it. We do not realize the originality of this idea. If one reads textbooks of international politics and international relations written 40 or 50 years ago, you would not find the word Nonalignment or the concept of non-alignment but today it is impossible to write anything about foreign policy without referring, at least, in passing to this concept. He introduced between the two sides to the Cold War, a non-aligned world, an area of peace, which prevented the sharp division of the world into two warring worlds. It is



When I presided - I have a vision in my mind  
of one world and a Japanese in the room. That father is in  
the letter is Katsuyama - a well known socialist. He was  
turned out of Japan in the old days  
The life that we live is that of the domination.

PRESIDING OVER THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AGAINST IMPERIALISM,  
BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 1927.

in his *Discovery of India* that he saw the outlines of two groupings emerging around USA and USSR and asked where this would leave the millions of people in Asia and Africa. They would remain an unawakened, discontented, seething humanity no longer prepared to tolerate the existing conditions. He saw the common threads of sentiment and invisible links which hold them together. This was his discovery of the Third World or the Nonaligned world that was beginning to emerge in fact though not in name. But he did not look at it as a new bloc but as an area of peace, geographically expanding and

this area in between that played a very crucial role in preventing a headlong collision between the titanic forces in the world.

Eventually, inside the blocs, he detected the growing trends towards peace, towards accommodation, towards the need of understanding each other. Nehru encouraged this process. It was for him the yearning for a One World society. He wanted India and the nonaligned countries to provide a bridge between the warring factions, for the maintenance of peace. He thought of India as a platform for the two contestants to meet, may be first of

all for competition between each other and ultimately for reconciling their differences. The manner in which the Cold War finally ended shows the validity of Nehru's analysis of world forces. It shows how within the blocs themselves, there were powerful currents for mutual accommodation.

In 1964, a few months before he passed away, he explained the nature and the role of Nonalignment and it is worth quoting in full what he said: "The basis of Nonalignment is our area of peace which has been consistently increased since the inception of the policy. This not only helps to create a sort of no-war land between the military blocs by making their war-like confrontation difficult, but also provides them with a common ground for cooperation in something like a workshop of peace. As more nations keep joining the peace club as against the nuclear club and the Cold War club, we expect this nonaligned grouping to grow and absorb other nations, the European nations like France and Czechoslovakia which today belong to NATO and boast of military alliances. We want the whole world to become part of this area of peaceful coexistence including ultimately the United States and the Soviet Union." This was the vision of Nehru's nonaligned world. Now that the Cold War is over, it has been argued by many scholars that the rationale of Nonalignment has disappeared. But the way in which Nehru has put forward his concept of Nonalignment in this quotation shows that its validity has survived.

Various theories are put forward with regard to the collapse of the Cold War system. Questions are asked like who won the Cold War and who was the loser. The Cold War's end is not considered as a failure of a system of international relations that the great powers had established; it is interpreted as a victory of one against the other. I would like to discuss this question a little later but before that let us have a look at Nehru's home front, his practical as well as visionary policies in the neighbourhood of India and in Asia. Today, we talk a great deal about the "Look East" policy, about our association with ASEAN, our aspiration to belong to APEC, about our initiative in the Indian Ocean Rim, the formation and evolution of SAARC and our good neighbourly policy that we have initiated recently. But if we look back upon and analyze what happened during the early Nehru period with India's relations and policy to the neighbours, it would become very clear that he was the forerunner of the Asian policy and he had a dream about Asia. And surprisingly here again I can go back to



1927 when he said that, in developing our foreign policy, we should naturally first cultivate friendly relations with countries of the East which have so much in common with us. And if you look at the conduct of his foreign policy during the early period, we would find that it was with neighbours like Nepal, Iran, Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon and Turkey, that he had the most active relationship. Indeed, treaties were concluded with several of these countries and if one looks at the ambassadorial appointments he made, he certainly sent important Ambassadors to the capitals, Washington, London, Paris, Moscow, but some of the best men, public men, were selected and sent to our immediate neighbours.

And then let us look at the actual conduct of policies. In fact he once wrote in a letter to the Chief Ministers, "I cannot appreciate the question being asked of us as to whether we are with the American group of powers or with the Soviet group. We are friendly with both, but essentially we function for ourselves and develop closer contacts with our neighbours". There was something, a phrase which we have forgotten, which was very current in those days, the South-East Asia Pattern. He had established the closest relations between India, Burma and Indonesia. These three countries followed more or less the same policies, world policies, and this relationship came to be known as a South-East Asia pattern which by and by extended to other countries in the region. In fact, he took considerable interest in Burma. When there was a civil war in Burma, he allowed the Burmese government to buy arms in India. At one time, he made a statement that the security of Burma is the security of India. And you are all aware of what he did during the Indonesian struggle for independence. No country in Asia has been involved so intimately in the freedom struggle of another country as India, under Nehru, was involved in the Indonesian struggle. He called a conference on Indonesia in New Delhi, which determined the stand the United Nations took for Indonesia getting its freedom. During the time of the Japanese Peace Treaty, he had the imagination to conclude a separate treaty with Japan recognizing Japan not as a defeated party but as an independent entity. I recollect soon after, at the time when the treaty was negotiated, I was a junior diplomat in Tokyo and how profoundly this gesture affected the minds and hearts of the ordinary Japanese.

Then, the role in Indo-China and Korea. These are just forgotten as if they are not significant events and people say very glibly these days that

Nehru had neglected his neighbours and Asia and was playing games with the great powers only. When the Korean War broke out, it was India's diplomacy that prevented a real war breaking out and that helped in the peace-making in that country. He said at one time that if this Korean war leads to a real war, all the dreams of India, its dreams of planning and development will be reduced to ashes and therefore it was incumbent on India to do something to pre-

vent the spread of this war. And when he was criticized about the futility of his intervention in Korea—some speeches were made in Parliament—he said, that if another occasion arises, he would send peace mission troops to Korea not once but a hundred times. That was the degree of his involvement in Asia at that time, an involvement which was constructive, imaginative, realistic and produced peaceful results.

So also in Indo-China. I would like

to say only one thing about the Indo-China settlement which India helped to bring about. After the Geneva Declaration was announced, he pointed out that the Convention of nonintervention which was embedded in the declaration should be extended to the rest of Asia and it should include even the great powers. In fact nonintervention was the basic tenet of his foreign policy. As you know in the five principles of peaceful coexistence which we signed with China, nonintervention is one of the important principles. It is not very much known that while it was Premier Chou en Lai who really formulated these five principles first, it was on Nehru's insistence that the principle of nonintervention was incorporated finally, after the signing of the Tibet Agreement. It was this principle that he held fast to as being central to peace in Asia and in the world. What I wish to emphasize is that Nehru's central preoccupation was Asia and it was standing on the platform of Asia as a whole. In fact, the events which happened in Asia, whether through great conferences like the Asian Relations Conference or the Bandung Conference, these had a world significance. Not only did they impact on the Indo-China war and the Korean war, but also had world significance. They are the measure of world events of the time. Major wars could have broken out in the world if peace had not been re-established primarily through Indian efforts.

There are one or two more complicated relationships in this region, one with China and another with Pakistan. About Nehru's China policy it is not necessary to say much to this distinguished audience except to stress the what he wanted was the acceptance of China by the rest of the world. He had a few considerations in projecting this policy. First was, of course, the relationship between the two ancient civilizations of Asia which he thought should work together in friendship and cooperation. He wanted that to happen. Then he had another consideration. His assessment was that China, even at the time it signed the Sino-Soviet Treaty would be an independent party working independently herself and not by any means as a satellite of the Soviet Union. He wanted this fact to blossom out as an actual fact. Therefore, his method was to bring out China into the world, into Asia. It was this policy which was bitterly suspected and opposed by the United States. I read recently a speech President Clinton made over the Voice of America after or during the visit of the President Jiang Zemin and he said—I am quoting it because it is

*Confidential - Not for publication*  
*International*  
 Report on The Congress against Imperialism held at Brussels from February 10<sup>th</sup> to February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1927, submitted by Jawaharlal Nehru to the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress.

In compliance with the resolution of the Indian National Congress, passed at Gandhinagar, appointing me their representative at the International Congress against Imperialism, to which I had the honour to attend the sessions of this International Congress and to take part in its proceedings. I am submitting separately a brief report for publication and for distribution amongst the members of the All India Congress Committee. But as it was not possible to refer to many matters in that report and as I wish the Working Committee to be in possession of all the facts, in order to enable them to take such action as they may deem necessary, I have decided to submit this further and more detailed report.

The Brussels Congress, regarded from any point of view, was an event of first class importance and it is likely to have far-reaching results. The English press, so far as I am aware, has given little or no publicity to it, with the exception of some labour organs. The continental press gave some more publicity but even here

Facsimile of the Report on 'The Congress Against Imperialism' held at Brussels in Feb, 1927. The Report was made by Jawaharlal Nehru



echo of what Nehru said in the 1950s about China—"the isolation of China is unworkable, counter-productive and potentially dangerous and isolation would encourage the Chinese to become hostile and to adopt policies of conflict with our own interest and values." The words used by President Clinton are not the same as Nehru's but the meaning is the same. It was precisely this argument Nehru had advanced in favour of the recognition of China by other countries after the liberation. Of course people say that his policy was a failure but why that policy failed was because while he recognized China and some other countries recognized China, the United States and its allies did not recognize China at the right time and that led to immense suffering and conflicts and tension in Asia. Therefore, one is glad to read the statement of President Clinton today, not to justify our policies retrospectively, but to say that for the future, this is a good sign.

After another series of meetings in Beijing, between President Yeltsin and President Jiang Zemin, an interesting communique was issued by them. I am only referring to what I read in the newspapers here. The communique says that the time for alliances, the time

for triangular strategic relations, is over. Well, China and, earlier, the Soviet Union had believed in such concepts. I find this very significant. Those who say that Nonalignment has no relevance in the present period ought to consider these statements which are echoes of the language of Nonalignment being spoken today by the great powers.

Today, we are trying to become members of the APEC, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. Nehru had written in his *Discovery of India* in 1945 that the Pacific would be the nerve centre of world politics in the next century and India would have to do much about this area. India is today not a member of the APEC but she is a dialogue partner of ASEAN, closely associated with it and involved in South East Asian developments. But the difference is that while we are trying to be in Asia and Asia Pacific today, we were a central player in Asia during the Nehru era. I am not saying this as any sort of criticism because there are many reasons, regional and international, for this, but I would like to put the record straight by saying that during Nehru's period India was an active player and an influential player in Asian affairs.

After the Cold War, apart from everything else, economic relations

have assumed supreme importance. Some people have made the projection that economic wars may arise in the world. I do not know; it need not necessarily be so, but one has to consider the great gap and the inherent conflict between the developing world and the developed world and it is in this context and in regard to this problem that Nonalignment has been asserting itself as a major force.

And then, in the military sense, one should ask as to why, even though the Warsaw Pact has been dissolved, NATO remains in existence. There are signs of it being used for cooperation for constructive purposes. But whether in Europe or in Asia, one does not know whether new alignments and groupings in conflict with each other might arise in the future or not. And in this context, Nehru's Nonalignment has a major preventive role to play even in the present world.

A new international order was a dream with Nehru. He was a great believer in the United Nations. Today we are talking about restructuring the United Nations. It was in 1960 that he said in the United Nations that the UN has not been fair to Asia and Africa; they have a right to be in the Security Council, he said. While, he said, he did

not want to press the point at that time he did wish to register the right of the countries of Asia and Africa to have a say and a role and a place in the Security Council of the United Nations.

And, of course, he was a passionate advocate of disarmament. Disarmament is talked of today in terms different than in Nehru's time and we have to direct our attention to that ethereal realm in which a high-technology armaments race is taking place. So if one supplies Nehru's advocacy of disarmament to the present stage, one has to somehow bring these questions of high-technology weapons almost unseen by the common eyes of the world and ask how it would be controlled and how it could be made a point of discussion in international fora.

All these questions are integrally related to Nehru's vision of the world and his vision of India. I think we can follow his vision only by making his vision of India a credible vision today. Today there is desperate need to inject into our thinking a bit of his vision of India of nearly one billion people, and see whether we can march together in unity and peace towards strength and make an impact on the world of the kind that Nehru would have liked us to make.

### THE EAST INDIA COMPANY: 1600—the mid-nineteenth century

Edited, with a new introduction by Patrick Tuck, University of Liverpool, UK.

This six-volume work consists of reprinted first-hand sources, scholarly surveys, and thematically arranged collections of recent journal articles, offering scholarly coverage of the most important phases of the Company's history, and presenting recent interpretations of its development. The volumes cover:

- the foundation and early operations of the Company in the seventeenth century
- the Company's transition from trading concern to Asiatic empire between 1757–1813
- the internal workings of the Company before its reform in 1773.

Boxed set of 6 Volumes

234x156  
Set: 0-415-15517-7

1808pp

March 1998

illus. approx. 15 b+w plates  
Price: £ 525.00

### THE EMPIRE AND ITS CRITICS, 1899–1939 *Classics of Imperialism*

Edited, with a new introduction by PETER CAIN, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

The eight books reprinted in this set played an important role in defining attitudes and expectations about imperialism on the British Left in the twentieth century. They are vital in understanding the transition from the liberal anti-imperialism of the nineteenth century to the more overtly socialist critiques of the twentieth.

#### Contents:

- Volume 1 EMPIRE OR DEMOCRACY (1939) *Leonard Barnes* 303pp
- Volume 2 THE WAR OF STEEL AND GOLD (1914) *Henry N. Brailsford* 320pp
- Volume 3 PATRIOTISM AND THE EMPIRE (1899) *J.M. Robertson* 208pp
- Volume 4 DEMOCRACY AFTER THE WAR (1917) *J.A. Hobson* 215pp
- Volume 5 LIBERALISM AND THE EMPIRE (1907) *F.W. Hirst* 240pp
- Volume 6 AFRICA AND THE PEACE OF EUROPE *E.D. Morel* 150pp
- Volume 7 EMPIRE AND COMMERCE IN AFRICA (1920) *Leonard Woolf* 382 pp
- Volume 8 LABOUR AND THE EMPIRE (1907) *J. Ramsey Macdonald* 127 pp.

British Empire Series

April 1998

Set: 0-415-17945-9:

8 Volume Set

216 x 138

3100 pp

Price: £ 550.00

Exclusively Distributed in India by:

BI PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.  
54, Janpath, New Delhi 110 001  
Tel: 3325313 Fax: 3323138



Branches: Ahmedabad/Bangalore/Calcutta/Chennai/Mumbai/  
Patna/New Delhi/Trivandrum

In case of difficulty please contact Area Manager in India:

R. SESHADRI, 32, Second Main Road, CIT East, Chennai 600 035  
Tel: (044) 4346244 Fax: (044) 4346529  
e-mail: itpsesha@giasmd01.vsnl.net.in

Showroom and Liaison office:

T. RAMANUJAM, Sales Executive

2/3 A, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002

Tel: 3287554 Fax: (011) 3281373 e-mail: itprama@giasd101.vsnl.net.in



# Contextualizing Narrative Art

Romila Thapar

DISCOURSE IN EARLY BUDDHIST ART: VISUAL NARRATIVES OF INDIA

By Vidya Dehejia

Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 1997, pp. ix+332, Rs. 1500.00

This is an enquiry into Buddhist narrative art in the study of which the role of the story itself is subordinated to the technique by which stories are communicated. The first part of the book explores the presentation of the narrative and identifies several different modes of visual narration which have been utilized by the artists who sculpted and painted at these early monuments. The stories are taken from texts on the life of the Buddha and from the *Jatakas* or other parts of the Pali Canon. The communication was generally with a viewer familiar with the stories and therefore presumably the artist could rearrange the constituents of the story to suit his representation of it. The modes identified are frequently found juxtaposed on the same monument, suggesting that each was a viable option.

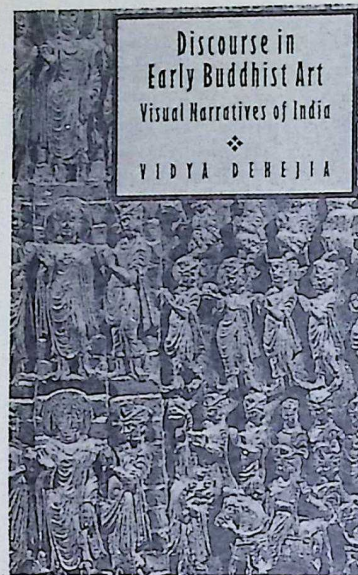
The modes range widely and are listed as monoscentic, depicting a single, identifiable event in a story; monoscentic narratives focussing on the depiction of the Buddha; continuous narrative using more than a single event; sequential narrative where each scene is demarcated; synoptic narrative where multiple modes are depicted in a single frame; and conflated narrative where the image of the Buddha is dominant and transcends time and space. Time is

seen as cyclic, hence the generally non-linear depiction of the story. However, it could be argued that both in the life story of the Buddha and in the *Jataka* stories narrating the previous lives of the Buddha, there is a linear element, particularly as none are in another time cycle. Resort to cyclic time as an explanation needs to be reconsidered, for there is frequently an intersection of linear and cyclic time.

Further chapters in the first part of the book analyse what are referred to as the "emblems". The multivalent nature of the sign is discussed. The concept of multivalence is said to be important as it is a mix of icon, index and symbol, where index refers to footprints, a parasol, a vacant seat and similar indicators. This is not an iconism as it was earlier labelled, a distinction which is useful and necessary. Another chapter discusses the Buddhist texts from where the narratives are taken and their chronology.

The second part of the book consists of eight chapters, each on a major site or set of sites, incorporating Buddhist narrative. These discuss the manner of communicating the narrative, the story communicated and the patrons and donors involved with these. Many of these sites carry a mixture of different modes and the images which constitute the story are not in any specific order. Most of these sites, barring the Gupta and post-Gupta period sites discussed in the last chapter, were Buddhist stupas of an earlier period. They were enlarged and enclosed by railings, usually in the first century BC and were embellished with low reliefs in stone added to the stupa or sculpted on the railing, on pillars and *toranas*, all providing the space for the narratives.

That stupas acquired stone railings at a particular point in time is a theme which could have been pursued further. Some stupas such as the one at Pauni originally had a wooden railing which was replaced with one in stone. Were these railings meant to resist damage to the stupa as is hinted at in a few inscriptions from Sanchi, where imprecatory



verses on the gateway threaten those who might damage the stupa or remove parts of it elsewhere—suggesting that there might have been some attempts at vandalising stupas? Were the railings demarcating the circumambulatory path and therefore did they have a ritual purpose? Were they intended to provide more space for the embellishment of the stupa? The date is significant since this is the period which sees the growth of the commercial and artisan professions as also the opening up of small-scale agriculture in various regions. The people involved with this change emerge as the main patrons of many of these stupas.

Stories such as those of the Vessantara, Mahakapapi, Shibi, Chaddanta and other *Jatakas*, or the animal *Jatakas*, would have been familiar not only to Buddhist visitors but to others as well, since they were drawn from a large body of folk stories although contextualised in Buddhist ethical norms. Some of the narrative scenes carry a small inscription mentioning the name of the story—no doubt a prompt for those acting as guides or for the knowledgeable lay person. Such labels decline in later times. At some sites such as those of south India and of Gandhara, the stories from the Buddha biographies assume greater importance than the *Jataka* stories, with the texts of northern Buddhism becoming important sources. The popularity of the *lalitavistara*, or the *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya* or the *Divyavadana*, ensured that the vastly embroidered events of the life of the Buddha, became familiar to many.

The main sites discussed are the stupas at Bharhut, Sanchi, Pauni, Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, the railings from Bodhi Gaya and Mathura, the

An exception to such community patronage was the stupa at Nagarjunakonda where the donors were largely the women of the Ikshvaku ruling family. An explanation for this gender differentiation would be of interest. The Ikshvaku men were patrons of Vedic Brahmanism. Was the gender division derived from ritual concerns?

stupas in Gandhara and Sarnath, some murals at Ajanta, narrative sculpture from Pala-Sena times and the illustrated manuscripts and scroll painting from the Himalayan regions.

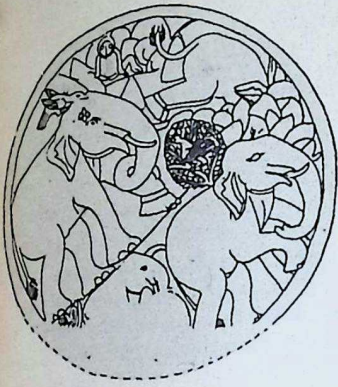
Among the early stupas, Bharhut and Sanchi were well-preserved and extensively decorated. Bharhut provides many examples of the monoscentic and the synoptic since the scenes are depicted in specific frames visible to those moving along the circumambulatory path. Sanchi Stupa No. 1 has a greater number of scenes from the life of the Buddha. Of the embellishments, probably the most impressive were the sculptured stone slabs added to the stupa at Amaravati. The stupas in Gandhara tended to be smaller but taller and the drum of the stupa therefore allowed of greater space for low reliefs. A smaller size encouraged single donors, some commissioning the narrative of the Buddha's life cycle.

Among the more interesting aspects of the data under discussion is the question of who selected the narratives. Since much of the depiction is based on individual donors providing the wherewithal, did each of them specify what they wanted depicted? Or was the selection left to the supervisory monks of the Sangha? That some of the stories were repeated may suggest, as the author argues, that the donors gave their preference. Alternatively it could be an indication of what the Sangha sought to emphasize. The glorification of gift giving explicit in the Vessantara *Jataka* would be one obvious example of this. It might be worth investigating whether there are any patterns in the correlation between donors and stories, particularly as there are various categories of each.

The identity and categories of donors at these stupas is a theme which various historians have now worked on, touching as it does on questions of

Among the more interesting aspects of the data under discussion is the question of who selected the narratives. Since much of the depiction is based on individual donors providing the wherewithal, did each of them specify what they wanted depicted? Or was the selection left to the supervisory monks of the Sangha?





gifts towards the embellishment of a *stupa*. The visibility of women donors is a striking feature of these votive inscriptions.

An exception to such community patronage was the *stupa* at Nagarjunakonda where the donors were largely the women of the Ikshvaku ruling family. An explanation for this gender differentiation would be of interest. The Ikshvaku men were patrons of Vedic Brahmanism. Was the gender division derived from ritual concerns? or communities in Andhra at that time, to whom royalty would wish to extend patronage, but not patronage of the first order. Patronage from those connected with the ruling family of the Vakatakas or high officials in their administration is available from some of the fifth century caves with wall paintings at Ajanta.

Vidya Dehejia's study of visual narratives in early Buddhist art is most helpful in setting out the context of what one sees at so many *stupa* sites of the early centuries A.D., and provides insights into how the embellishment of the monument was perceived by the donor, the craftsman who created the panels or the murals, and possibly the monk "administrator". In correlating the textual version of a story with its visual counterpart, the use of analyses derived from those who have worked on folk tales, such as Vladimir Propp, may have provided additional illumination. The sculptor or painter separated the story into its constituent elements and then reassembled them according to his own design. The space allotted for the story would have also influenced its being represented as monoscenic or as sequential narrative. The viewer is required to recognize the constituents and reconstruct the story in its known form. How the reassembled pattern was arrived at is examined by the author in discussing various narratives, but perhaps a further exploration of this activity would have made the process even clearer.

Vidya Dehejia concludes her study by stating, "Philosophical changes in the Buddhist creed, along with the evolving pantheon of supra-mundane beings, led to a sharp decline in the earlier vibrant art of Buddhist visual narrative" (p. 273). Her own analyses suggest that there was more to it than philosophical changes and the evolving pantheon, for these changes had first to be visualized by the donor and the sculptor before they could take form as narrative art. The reasons for the decline may be sought in other changes as well.

Romila Thapar is Emeritus Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

## Contextualizing A Very 'Modern' Man

Amiya P. Sen

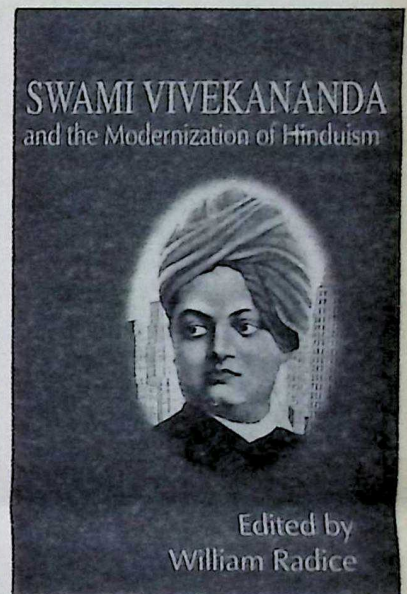
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE MODERNIZATION OF HINDUISM

Edited by William Radice

SOAS Studies on South Asia, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998, pp. 299, Rs. 475.00

Two important events connected with the Ramakrishna Vivekananda movement have been commemorated in the recent past, first, the centenary celebrations of Vivekananda's well-known address before the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and following that, the centenary celebrations of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The book under review is really a part of the first and includes fourteen essays nearly all of which were written for a workshop convened by the University of London (SOAS) in November 1993. It would be important to point out however that the idea behind the workshop is not simply commemorative but a larger social and academic purpose of consciously contesting the systematic appropriation of the Swamiji's life and message by Right-Fundamentalist combines. From this perspective, the SOAS workshop and the general drift of the scholarly output that emerged therefrom may indeed be seen as the rightful rebuttal of VHP celebrations of Vivekananda's Chicago Address, also held sometime in 1993.

Its academic excellence notwithstanding, there is a certain structural weakness about the book on which I feel I should comment at the outset. Evidently, some of the essays in the book were added on almost as an afterthought to 'embrace not only Vivekananda himself but his contemporaries and the religious, social and cultural context from which he emerged' (Foreword: ix). *Ipsa facto*, there is nothing fundamentally wrong about this decision and I have no hesitation in saying that the essays which appear to have been subsequently added are in themselves admirable works of scholarship. On the other hand, if strictly enforced, the framework adopted by the Editor would leave out William R. Pinch's essay (Essay 12) which covers the period 1918-36 and does not concern either Vivekananda, his contemporaries or the specific context from which they emerged. In some ways the thematic continuity too is disturbed by



somewhat randomly situating these essays. Perhaps this book would have been more reader-friendly if, for instance, Nita Kumar's essay on "Sanskrit Pandits and the modernisation of Sanskrit in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" (Essay 3) could have been clubbed together with Vivienne Baumfield's "Science and Sanskrit: Vivekananda's views on education" (Essay 9). Ideally, of course, the book should have been so structured as to bring together all essays more directly concerned with Vivekananda, leaving the rest (Essays 3, 5, 6, 12) to constitute a separate section. In commenting on the essays of this book I shall by and large follow this pattern.

The opening essay by Professor Roychaudhuri "Swami Vivekananda's construction of Hinduism" (SOAS Annual Lecture, 1997) sets the pace as it were, for most of the essays that follow. It is also of particular interest to this reviewer for apparently, Professor Roychaudhuri's major arguments are born of his dissatisfaction with what I had suggested in my 1993 study *Hindu Revivalism in Bengal*. I have indeed reason to be grateful to Professor



... if Vivekananda is today increasingly identified with a new Hindu-Fundamentalist resurgence, not all of it can be attributed to manipulative constructions. Somewhat contrary to what both Professors Nemai Sadhan Bose (Essay I) and Roychoudhuri say, there are certain ideas or suggestions in Vivekananda which consciously or unconsciously fed into the reactionary climate in late nineteenth century Bengal.

Roychoudhuri for reviving and reinvigorating an older debate as engaging with it once again gives me an opportunity to be a little clearer about both his arguments and mine.

I have no quarrel whatsoever with Professor Roychoudhuri's preference for 'Hindu reaction' in place of 'Hindu revivalism' (p. 13). The reactive element was indeed strongly present in revivalist attitudes. On the other hand, 'reaction' may be only as adequate or inadequate an expression as 'revival' in encapsulating the delicate nuances of public opinion in late nineteenth century Bengal. I feel that at one level, 'revival' is a more broad-based term which incorporates both outright orthodox reaction and a more positive response which leaned towards reform, albeit to an extent and conducted at a certain pace. 'Hindu reaction' on the other hand appears to create too sharp a wedge between the two positions. One other reason why I chose to use the term 'revival' is its consistent and extensive use by Hindu-Bengali figures of the day and somehow I cannot bring myself to believe that this was done for the lack of alternative (more appropriate) expressions. It is quite likely that in the context of the late nineteenth century, the choice of the word 'revival' was quite tendentious. Nevertheless its widespread use by writers and commentators cutting across many cultural sub-strata; 'liberal', and 'conservative', 'reformer' and 'reactionary' is something that historical reconstruction cannot entirely overlook.

I am also not sure if ultimately, Professor Roychoudhuri's conclusions about Vivekananda's life and work are so radically different from the ones I

profess. Perhaps he misjudges me in suggesting that my work only 'confirms the received perception' about Vivekananda representing the 'high noon of Hindu revival' (p. 1), or (this would be belied by his own admission (p. 13)) that my work 'correctly' identifies the Age of Consent Bill controversy (1891-2) as the high point of revivalist/reactionary movements.

The inclusion of Vivekananda in a work on Hindu revivalism to my mind does not necessarily collapse the important differences that always remained between him and certain arch-conservative figures and I dare say that perhaps my work was the first work in the English language that drew the attention of the academic world to such critical differences. At the same time, it is still my contention that if Vivekananda is today increasingly identified with a new Hindu-Fundamentalist resurgence, not all of it can be attributed to manipulative constructions. Somewhat contrary to what both Professors Nemai Sadhan Bose (Essay I) and Roychoudhuri say, there are certain ideas or suggestions in Vivekananda which consciously or unconsciously fed into the reactionary climate in late nineteenth century Bengal. This is an aspect which I have examined in some more detail in my forthcoming biography of Swami Vivekananda (OUP, Delhi).

It is a pity that Professor Roychoudhuri's essay on Vivekananda's 'construction' of Hinduism does not attempt a more critical appraisal of his religious thought. To me this is cause for some surprise as in his *Europe Reconsidered*, Roychoudhuri had identified, quite legitimately I think, the Hindu sanyasi in Vivekananda as the most dominant aspect of his personality. Perhaps it is this reluctance to seriously engage with these questions that has sometimes led Roychoudhuri to gloss over certain complexities. On page 2 for example, he suggests that Vivekananda 'unqualifiedly' accepted Maya and the Advaitic idea of the world being in illusion. Such a posture on the part of Vivekananda, if I may suggest would have seriously impinged on his activism and commitment to social service. It is actually on record that Vivekananda once sharply rebuked Mahendranath Gupta, the well-known chronicler of Sri Ramakrishna for suggesting that human efforts at improvement were meaningless given the 'illusive' nature of this world. That he also interpreted Maya somewhat differently is evident from an essay written by Govinda Chandra Dev, a philosopher from East Bengal and admirer of Vivekananda (also the subject of Essay 13 of this book).

Finally, there is the observation that Professor Roychoudhuri makes about the Ramakrishna Mission being more concerned with social service in general than with the education of the masses (p. 1). To this I can only say that after a stage, Vivekananda himself appears to have given up the idea of mass-education, possibly for practical reasons. Besides, it is important not to overlook the point that at one level, humanistic social service is less controversial than education which, more often than not, is linked to specific cultural needs of the community. This is a constraint which would have been particularly relevant for Vivekananda who, in respect of social and religious issues, followed 'the line of least resistance'.

In the following essay, Indira Chaudhuri-Sengupta presents a fairly detailed account of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago with particular reference to the delegates from India including Vivekananda. Its title, I fear, could be the source of some confusion for it puts 1892 and not 1893 as the date of the Parliament. The Parliament was indeed originally scheduled to open in 1892 but for certain reasons postponed to the following year. However, to maintain 1892 as the official date of the Parliament for that reason alone is, in my opinion, making too technical a point. Ms. Chaudhuri-Sengupta does also make the important point about how, rather than make a 'schematic presentation of Hinduism at the Parliament, Vivekananda presented it in 'universalistic terms', (p. 22, 26, 28). It is however well-known that this 'universalistic' presentation itself was bound by an essentializing paradigm of Vedanta (more specifically Advaita Vedanta). It also occurs to me that somewhat in the manner of Rammohun, Vivekananda made an important distinction between his projections of Indian religion within India and outside. In the West, by his own admission, he never especially propagated the personality or preachings of his spiritual guru, Ramakrishna. On his return to India, as Professor Roychoudhuri aptly points out, (p. 3), he did contribute to the ongoing effort to project Ramakrishna as an unique, avataric figure. This is a point which I think Ms. Chaudhuri-Sengupta herself tacitly makes in relation to Vivekananda's views on woman-related questions (p. 30f). While in the West, Vivekananda consistently denied ill-treatment of Hindu widows (p. 32), back home he is known to have contributed to the Widows Home at Barahnagar run by the Brahmo Sasipada Banerji. I think that on the whole, the conservative side to

Vivekananda preferred the social rehabilitation of widows to the idea of widow marriages but here surely, he was only echoing a sentiment with which most 'reactionary'/revivalist figures of his day could be identified.

I have enjoyed reading the essay by Julius Lipner (Essay 4) especially as it renews academic interest in a relatively unknown but not unimportant figure, Brahmadand Upadhyay. Essentially, this is a study of the transformation in Brahmadand's attitude towards Vedanta. As a Catholic Brahmadand began as a fierce critic of Vedantic pantheism, an attitude he shared with other Christian missionaries of his time (though I am given to understand that Advaita Vedanta is not quite pantheism). Subsequently however, he tried to integrate Advaita postulates with a Christian world-view. This, we are told, was largely the result of influences coming from Vivekananda's joining Vedanta to the emerging nationalist discourse. However, as a man who lived until 1907 Brahmadand would have been also influenced by the Swadeshi upsurge. Incidentally, he was also an ardent admirer of Sri Ramakrishna.

Dermot Killingley's "Vivekananda's Western message from the East" (Essay 7) is another essay I liked immensely. Killingley points out (p. 10), quite perceptively I thought, the tacit assumption made by Vivekananda about the intellectual history of the West also being the intellectual history of the nineteenth century. This is a point that connects with the observation made by Ms. Chaudhuri-Sengupta (p. 34) about Indian discursive efforts being 'fixed by

... he suggests that Vivekananda 'unqualifiedly' accepted Maya and the Advaitic idea of the world being in illusion. Such a posture on the part of Vivekananda, if I may suggest would have seriously impinged on his activism and commitment to social service. It is actually on record that Vivekananda once sharply rebuked Mahendranath Gupta, the well-known chronicler of Sri Ramakrishna for suggesting that human efforts at improvement were meaningless given the 'illusive' nature of this world.



*Vivekananda was a very modern man but did not for that reason share the positivist view which somewhat naively saw 'modernisation' as linear and unending progression.*

specific circumstances in a space that was colonially defined'. Of particular interest is Killingley's analysis of Paul Hacker's thesis attributing the moral philosophy of Vivekananda to influences from the German Vedantist, Paul Deussen. A similar analysis if I may point out, occurs in an earlier essay by William Halbfass 'Practical Vedanta' in Dalmia and Stietencorn (ed.) *Representing Hinduism*. Neither of them however appear to have consulted the Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita (or its English rendering) where there are some interesting references to Vivekananda's early response to Vedanta.

Essays 8 and 9 deal with two important themes of Vivekananda's attitude to 'seva' (social service) and to education respectively. Of these, the first is by Gwilym Beckerlegge who appears to have developed on an earlier (1986) essay on the same theme. The central argument of this essay, if I understand it correctly, is that neither the influences from Ramakrishna nor those from Western-Christian ethics are in themselves sufficient to explain Vivekananda's strong commitment to social service; an argument which rightfully restores the importance of Vivekananda's personal mediation in the matter. At places however, the discussion becomes too general and dilatory with the essayist also bringing in information relating to the Radhaswami Satsang, the Swaminarayan movement etc. The next essay by Vivienne Baumefield, one thought, could have been similarly done without the details on the Company's education policy. There is an attempt here to compare Vivekananda's views on education with those found among other contemporary individuals and institutions like the Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Spencer, Rabindranath and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. Surprisingly, there is not adequate reference to either Vidyasagar or Satish Mukherjee and his National Education policy.

The following essay (Essay 10) by Glyn Richards entitled "Vivekananda and Essentialism" is a thoughtful analysis of certain postulates, especially

those concerning Vivekananda's religious thinking. One extremely interesting point that Richards might have more forcefully made is that often essentializing tendencies too can be operatively quite tolerant (p. 213). Since Vivekananda believed all religions to be essentially one, this encouraged him, argues Richards, to encourage religious diversity so that ultimately, 'every man may have a religion unto himself' (p. 213). With regard to Advaita Vedanta, Richards also throws open the interesting question as to whether Vivekananda took this to constitute certain general universal principles or a historical religion or philosophy (p. 16). If, as Richards argues, Vivekananda's preference was for the former, it might have come into conflict with two aspects of his personality. Firstly, there is the argument that India was the seat of highest spirituality, which surely, Vivekananda wished to defend historically. That apart, there is his activism which, I imagine, would have made him ill at ease with entirely abstract ideas.

Kenneth Jones' comparative study of Vivekananda and two Sanatanist leaders from the Punjab, Shradha Ram Phillauri and Din Dayalu Sharma (Essay II) only confirms his longstanding expertise on Punjab studies. Some of the conclusions in this essay however are debatable. While there are, no doubt, broad areas of agreement between these three figures, it appears too uncritical to suggest (as Jones does) that 'for them the rituals, beliefs, sacred texts and social structures of contemporary Hinduism were correct and divinely inspired' (p. 242). On the issue of sacred texts alone, the reader's attention is invited to some of Vivekananda's letters such as those written to Pramada Das Mitra that express anger and bafflement at the fact that the shastras speak with multiple voices. On page 227 furthermore, footnotes 15 and 16 seem to have changed places. What I nonetheless found interesting in the essay was that whereas 'Sanatanist' figures like Phillauri and Sharma were familiar with Persian and even translated Christian polemical tracts into local languages, no such activities apparently can be associated with their rivals the Aryas or other reformist groups of the Punjab.

Hilturd Rustau's essay (Essay 13) on Swamiji's visions of ideal society and its impact on Govinda Chandra Dev is an interesting study of Vivekananda's legacy in Bengal. Dev (b. 1907) was a keen student of philosophy who also became the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission in erstwhile East Pakistan. He died in 1971, a victim of Pakistani genocide. It appears as though

in this reconstruction, Rustau has not used all available writings of Govinda Chandra. I was also intrigued by the identification of Rammohun Roy with Vishishtadvaita and Ramakrishna primarily with Advaita. From what little I know of these figures, the opposite appears to be the case.

The empirical richness and analytical excellence of the remaining essays in the book are beyond doubt. Those interested in the changing attitudes towards caste in colonial India will find Susan Bayly's essay (Essay 6) fascinating. Also concerned with caste movements but within a perceptibly different framework is the essay by Pinch which I personally found very interesting. This deals with the interesting social and ideological contestation that develops between two Vaishnava communities (Ramanujis and Ramanandis) in Gangetic upper India and subsequently spills over into Sanskritising movements among certain agrarian castes. What I particularly found interesting is Pinch's point disputing standard arguments relating to the 'Ramjanmabhumi' controversy to a colonial historiography alone. Rather than be understood in terms of Hindu-Muslim conflict, the need for a birthplace of Ram Pinch argues, may reflect new ideological needs emerging among upwardly mobile castes claiming Kshatriya status (p. 263). Nita

Kumar (Essay 3) brings in her excellent knowledge of Benaras to produce a particularly useful study on Sanskrit Pandits and the modernisation of Sanskrit education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Vasudha Dalmia's essay (Essay 5) concerns the life and times of the major literary figure from the Hindi belt, Harish Chandra of Benares. Those who have had the occasion to read her recent book (and even earlier essays) will be only too familiar with the major arguments in this essay. What I did not comprehend as well was Dalmia's attempt to simultaneously invest the modernization of tradition with what appears to be mutually opposed qualities of 'legitimation' and 'improvement'. If, as Dalmia argues, Harish Chandra felt that the 'timeless' Hindu tradition could suitably adapt itself in keeping with emerging needs, then 'improvement' may not be the most appropriate expression to use. This, incidentally, is a point which Radice quite pertinently makes in relation to Vivekananda himself (p. ix). Vivekananda was a very modern man but did not for that reason share the positivist view which somewhat naively saw 'modernisation' as linear and unending progression.

*Amiya P. Sen is currently Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.*

## Read

# MAINSTREAM

Mainstream Agency sale is handled entirely by

## CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY

E4/4 Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi 110 055  
Telephone: 529385/770536, Telegram: Akbarghar

Anybody wanting to take an agency for Mainstream  
kindly contact Central News Agency



# Explorations Into India's Regional Cultures

Seema Alavi

LUCKNOW: MEMORIES OF A CITY

Edited by Violette Graff

Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 299, Rs. 475.00

AWADH UNDER THE NAWABS: POLITICS, CULTURE AND COMMUNAL RELATIONS 1722-1856

Edited by Surendra Mohan

Manohar Books, 1997, pp. 242, Rs. 500.00

THE NABOBS: A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE ENGLISH IN 18TH CENTURY INDIA

Edited by Percival Spear

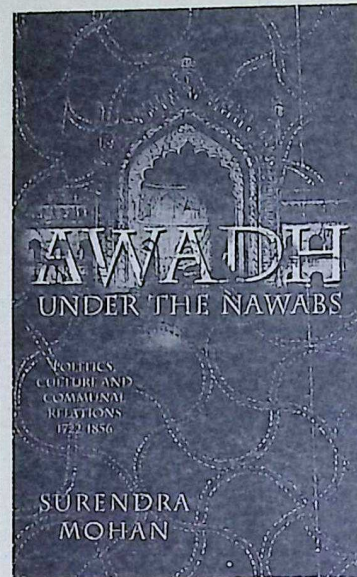
Oxford India Paperbacks, 1998, pp. 215, Rs. 195.00

Three books expressing intellectual concern at the "decay" of the "cosmopolitan" order of Awadh, modern day Uttar Pradesh, have appeared at a time when the syncretic culture of the region stands most threatened by the BJP-RSS government in the state. The academic interest with distinct political overtones is articulated most clearly in Violette Graff (Ed.), *Lucknow: Memories of a City*, and in S. Mohan, *Awadh Under the Nawabs: Politics, Culture and Communal Relations 1722-1856*, Percival Spear's book *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in 18th Century India*, engages with the issue tangentially

by highlighting the resilience of social life in 18th century India which created space for the cultural accommodation of the Englishmen.

The coalescing of academic agendas with political concerns is always very heartening. But it is even more encouraging when retired IAS officers join the bandwagon of intellectuals and use their administrative experience and resources to provide significant and politically useful interpretations of our past. Surendra Mohan, a retired IAS officer of UP cadre, plays precisely this balming role. His book *Awadh Under the Nawabs* provides a novel interpretation of the popular Lucknow expression "pahley aap" which is the hallmark of the city's social etiquette. Mohan says that the expression connotes more than etiquette, "it has a deeper meaning: understand and respect the views of others, before putting across your own. It was a philosophy of co-existence. For a multi-racial society like we have in India nothing else will suit more than the idiom of *pahley aap*. This is the basic ambience of Awadh."

Mohan discusses the making of this accommodative Awadh ambience in an interesting chronological narrative that delves into the socio-cultural history of the region from 1722 to 1856. He gives a comprehensive overview of the region's literary, architectural and musical traditions as they evolved under the shadow of the English East India Company. He views the English Company as disruptive of the evolving



syncretic culture of the region. The Company's manoeuvres he argues were resisted by the region in 1857. In the "first war of independence" the cosmopolitan culture of Awadh was best exemplified as Hindus and Muslims fought together "on the plank of Hindustan being a nation entitled to have its own rulers."

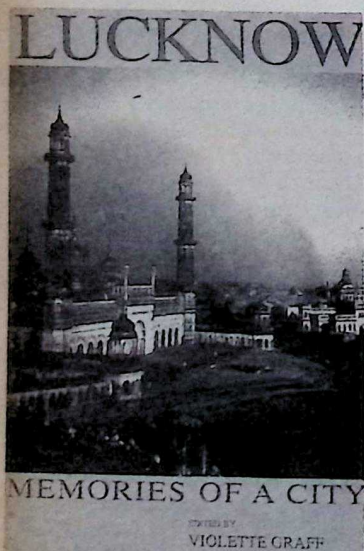
Graff's book on Lucknow further explores the constituents of Lucknow's "syncretic" political culture. A set of 15 brilliantly researched essays discuss the strands that shaped the culture of the city as expressed in its arts, architecture, language and music. The essays of Muzaffar Alam and Mike Fisher provide a political backdrop for the subsequent articles which bring gender and colonialism centre stage to the culture studies agenda. Here, the insightful essays of Veena Oldenberg, and J.R.I. Cole on Lucknow courtesans and noblewomen respectively and that of Gail Minault on education of women in colonial Lucknow introduce the concept of gender in the making of the city's cultural identity. Oldenberg shows how in the *kothas* of cosmopolitan Lucknow, where religious identities remained submerged, the courtesans saw themselves as women first and constructed their sexuality fearlessly to ideologically challenge male patriarchy. The articulation of female sexuality in the *kothas* gave to the city its cultural distinctivity.

Again, some of the essays in the volume argue for a greater centrality of the colonial experience in the study of Lucknow's culture. The essays of Jean Marie Lafont on Europeans in Lucknow and that of Rosie Llewyn Jones on the European influences on Lucknow architecture appear to suggest an incorporative relationship between the region's culture and the colonial presence.

The essays of Mushirul Hasan, Francis Robinson and Peter Reeves look at how nationalist politics in colonial Lucknow intersected with its cosmopolitan culture, cut into its body and began to spill out its cultural referents. A process which was often manifested in Shia-Sunni sectarian clashes, communal skirmishes and caste conflicts. Violette Graff's article shows how the region coped with its politico-cultural legacy from 1977 to 1991. Together the essays on gender, colonialism and nationalist politics move beyond the religious identity categories and provide a far more nuanced and complex notion of Lucknow's "syncretic" culture.

Percival Spear's book though not located specifically in the Awadh region takes a more general look at the issue of regional cultural traditions in 18th century India which provided a space for the English sahibs to interact with indigenous society. In the process some Englishmen earned the epithet of Nabobs—oriental prince—in England. Spear provides detailed evidence from Calcutta, Madras, Surat and Bombay to argue that the significant transition of the English Company from a corporate entity in the 1750s to a political power in the 1760s left an indelible imprint both on Indian society as well as on the career graphs of Englishmen. He says that in this transition period "we get a rapid transformation from the purely commercial factor of the fifties to the merchant turned soldier or politician in the sixties and finally proclaiming himself gentleman". Among other things this development led to the urban growth of settlements like Calcutta. The new Nabobs built garden houses, town houses, magnificent buildings and indulged in animal hunts and fights as they were left free to interact with indigenous society to "know" the people and their politics. In these days of very little political control the Englishmen

*The coalescing of academic agendas with political concerns is always very heartening. But it is even more encouraging when retired IAS officers join the bandwagon of intellectuals and use their administrative experience and resources to provide significant and politically useful interpretations of our past.*





Collectively, these three fascinating volumes make a strong case for establishing interconnections between colonial studies, gender studies and nationalist politics in understanding the cultural underbelly of a region's colonial and post colonial experience.

syncreticism, the contributors to the Graff volume suggest that perhaps a more incorporative and expansive definition of syncreticism which takes into account issues of gender and colonialism is desired. How then are we to understand the falling apart of this syncreticism? Was colonialism the only disruptive agency? Can we at all date the disintegration of the syncretic ethos of the region? That there are no simple answers to these questions is validated by the insightful essays of Mushirul Hasan on Shia-Sunni sectarian strife in colonial Lucknow, and Peter Reeves and Violette Graff on the trajectories of nationalist politics in the colonial and post-colonial period. These studies indicate that the transformation of Lucknow's syncretic culture followed different trajectories and was triggered by a variety of factors at different points of time: the politics of the Congress, the policies of the colonial state and later by the BJP and RSS combine. Collectively, these three fascinating volumes make a strong case for establishing interconnections between colonial studies, gender studies and nationalist politics in understanding the cultural underbelly of a region's colonial and post colonial experience.

Individually, both Mohan and Spear leave a lot of historiographical ground uncovered. Mohan does not engage in any meaningful way to the historiography of the 18th century regional formations. At best there is a diffidence to recognize and characterize the historical process resulting in the emergence of the regional political order of Awadh in the 18th century. Ironically, even though Mohan defiantly dismisses the phrase "state formation" to describe the emergence of Awadh Nawabi what follows in his subsequent chapters are fascinating details of the social and cultural reconfigurations leading to the emergence of a new polity. One wonders what alternate frame he has in mind to characterize these significant transitions of the 18th century.

Finally, Spear's understanding of the 18th century mindset also perhaps needs to be qualified in view of the recent monographs on the judicial and military sphere of the English Company's rule in India. For instance, the transition that he identifies from the oriental "nabobs" phase of the 1760s to the anglicising drives of Lord Cornwallis was not as neat and clear cut as he makes it out to be. Cornwallis' reforms were peppered by significant compromises with Hastings' brand of orientalism.

Seema Alavi is Assistant Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

## Losing the East, Losing Religion

Sunil Dasgupta

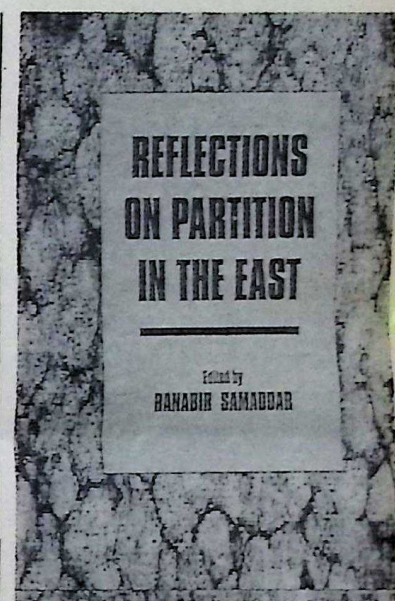
REFLECTIONS ON PARTITION IN THE EAST

Edited by Ranabir Samaddar

Vikas, New Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, 1997, pp. 215, Rs. 295.00

Along with the apocryphal tales of Gopal Bhar, my grandmother told me stories about the other side. 'Opar-ey,' she would say, her lips tightening and her eyes twinkling even through the thick after-cataract lenses, "we owned a hundred tanks full of fresh fish and land you couldn't walk across in a day, mango trees we never counted, and temples—two hundred of them—with their own puruts, every one of them. There was never anything we needed. That was our Bhuinya Bari." As a child growing up in North India, away from Bengal, where every grandmother had equally fantastic stories, I believed her far more than other refugee boys who had the reality check of the stories their friends heard. For three months a year during the holidays, my head would be filled with drastic plans of reclaiming my heritage, with force if necessary. (A swamiji from Bharat Sevashram Sangh, a revivalist Hindu monastic order popular in West Bengal, who visited every month for collections and whom I liked very much, told me how the order's monks slaughtered a train-full of Muslims in, as he described it, retaliation against the train-load of dead Hindus 'they' had sent from the other side.)

Until, of course, I saw *Buniyaad* on television. My grandmother's stories seemed as unnatural—how did she get the round figures of a hundred fish tanks and two hundred temples?—as the tall tales of this West Punjabi family uprooted by partition. Though the East had a high coincidence of class and religious divisions—Hindus were landowners and the Muslims peasants—there was no way every refugee family was as rich as they claimed. My Sikh friends in school, sons of farm-owning resettlers in the Terai, were more proud of their present than, perhaps, a poorer past. As I learnt more about the partition, however, an incongruity struck me. Why was the partition in the West so much more perva-



sive in popular history than the partition in the East? Why was Punjab on primetime television while Bengal remained forgotten? Hadn't Gandhi gone to Calcutta to stop the 'madness'? He didn't go to Amritsar. Wasn't Noakhali the worst of Hindu-Muslim rioting? Didn't we suffer more? Shouldn't we (the Bengalis) wear the badge of heroic stoicism that had been usurped by a pregnant-looking Deepa Sahi wrapped in a shawl?

If this sounds like the post-Holocaust bickering between Jewish groups competing to be the real victims, please bear with me. (I have hesitated in making this argument in public before because it does seem hypocritical to want to be a victim when I wasn't even there. And, wasn't the neglect of Bengal a Marxist clarion call? The political stick to beat the Center with as Bengalis axed the industrial base they had been sitting on for so long?) The secularism of modern India has celebrated the cross-communal culture. Punjabi Hindus and Muslims, it was popularly said, had more in common with each other



than Punjabis and Tamilians, and yet the borders kept these brothers separated. It was a celebration of secular regionalism over religion. That was the Indian project. Fifty years later, we now know how superficial it was. Punjabi Hindu and Muslims might have more in common, but the 'madness' of Ayodhya was the true India. As disgusting as it sounds to me and to others who never gave religion a serious thought—after all, so many of us grew

up going to chapel even though we were not Christians—India is driven by religion. It isn't India alone. Bosnia and Chechnya are obvious examples, but even the United States is driven by religion on key issues such as abortion, welfare, and school prayer.

As the celebration of secular regionalism marked India's first fifty years, the next fifty seem set for a celebration of religion over regionalism. This new Indian project—like the old secular

one—might lead to the opposite consequences. Like Ayodhya was the result of years of secular constructivism, religious constructivism might release increased regionalism. The Tamil problem in Sri Lanka is one example of how this might happen. Instead of fighting for Hinduism, we might reassert our Bengali-ness, or luxuriate in our Punjabi-pan. Clearly, the Shiv Sena is forerunner of that trend, moving away from Hindu-to Marathi-chauvinism

quite deliberately. Therefore, it becomes important, in my view, to understand the elements of regionalism that might provide the faultlines for future conflict when everything from economic growth to cultural position will be defined in regional terms—as religion does today. The only answer I have found for the disproportionate presence of the western partition in popular history is a simple one: Punjab was closer to the heart of India, to Delhi, to

On Sunday 20 May 1498, the Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama (1469–1524) landed in Calicut (now Kozhikode). It was the beginning of Europe's colonization of Asia. 20 May 1998 is the 500th anniversary of this historic event.

Da Gama's voyage lasted 314 days. However, ten years before da Gama, Pero da Covilha had reached India by way of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. Da Gama made two more voyages in 1502 and 1524, the last as the viceroy of Portuguese India. In 1510, Afonso de Albuquerque (1453–1515) seized Goa and established it as the power base of the Portuguese Empire in Asia. The poet, Luis Vaz de Camões (1524?–80) spent fourteen years (1553–67) as a soldier in Goa. A distant cousin of da Gama, he celebrates his kinsman's historic voyage in *Lusiads* (1572), Portugal's national epic. Camões' statue in old Goa in front of the Basilica of Bom Jesus, which contains the embalmed body of St. Francis Xavier (1506–52), the apostle of India, shows him with *The Lusiads* in one hand and a sword in the other. Portuguese rule in Goa ended as late as 1961.

Legend has it that the apostle Thomas (also known as the "Doubting Thomas") visited India soon after the crucifixion and died a martyr in north Madras. The hill where he was speared is known as St Thomas Mount (Parangimalai in Tamil). Camões tells his story in the tenth canto of *The Lusiads*.

This year is also the 500th anniversary of the birth of the Rajasthani bhakti poet, Mirabhai (1498–1546) who was born near Merta a fortress-city about fifty miles northeast of Ajmer.

We carry below the poem "On the Quincentenary of the Landing of Vasco da Gama in Calicut, May 20, 1498" and a song (song 72 from part 2: "ramaiya bin nind na avai") translated from Mirabai's *Padavali*. One written and the other translated by R. Parthasarathy.

### On the Quincentenary of the Landing of Vasco da Gama in Calicut, May 20, 1498

You who usurp the title of the messengers of God,  
do you think you are following St. Thomas?  
Luis Vaz de Camões, *The Lusiads* (1572)

#### 1. Afonso de Albuquerque

The dark and threatening sea was now behind us.  
Far from home we came upon land  
not explored by the imagination.

rich in spices and precious metals.

In order to spread the faith among the heathen.  
we spared neither mosque nor temple.

If any native dared to stand up to us,  
we blew the poor bastard's head off.  
In our quest for gold we left no city standing:

we burned entire villages for it.

Praise be to the Lord!

How else shall we inherit His kingdom?

#### 2. Luís Vaz de Camões

Gulls wrinkle the air.  
The boat heaves, opens the river's eye  
in the twinkling of a street.

The engine stops.  
Houses drop into place. From the funnel  
smoke balloons towards Ilhas.

You step out, and a carreira takes you  
to the heart of Goa:  
echo of immaculate bells

from hilltops flagged with pale crosses.  
Under the sun's oppressive glare  
he stands alone in a corner,

an unrepentant schoolboy,  
book in hand,  
spanning an empire.

from the Tagus to the China seas,  
You stop to take a picture:  
a storm of churches breaks about your eyes.

R. Parthasarathy

#### 3. How Can I Sleep Without Krishna?

How can I sleep without Krishna?  
Wrenched from his arms how can I survive?  
I am driven back by the flames of love.  
Without him my house is dark and unwelcome.  
Of what use are lamps in his absence?  
Not for me the pleasures of the bed:  
I spend my nights sleepless.  
Does any one know when my love will return?

The lightning thrashes about in the net of black clouds:  
Frogs and waterbirds, cuckoos and peacocks  
Call out to one another.  
In vain I fight back the tears.  
Tell me, friends, what shall I do? Where shall I go?

Like a venomous snake, his absence has bitten me:  
I feel death in my bones.  
Go, bring the herb at once.  
Who among my friends will return with my love?

You stole her heart, Lord. When will you meet her?  
When will you come to talk and laugh with Mira?

Mirabai Translated from the Hindi by R. Parthasarathy



those who mattered. The Punjabi refugees came to Delhi and became bureaucrats, politicians, traders, and businessmen. The East Bengalis went to Calcutta and became trade union leaders, clerks, or remained underemployed. I picked up Ranabir Samaddar's edited volume, *Reflections on Partition in the East*, hoping for some answers for these imbalances in popular discourse. This is especially disconcerting because I believed there was a greater East-West balance in academic work on partition. The contributors are among modern Bengal's (West and East) cerebral heavyweights—historians, social scientists, writers, a well-known journalist. If there was an answer, it should have been here. However, the book does not even address the regional divide in the post-independence narrative of the partition. Apart from Subir Bhaumik's article on the Northeast and Samaddar's article on post-independence migration from East Bengal to the West, all the others might well have been written about Punjab and reached similar conclusions. (Subhoranjan Dasgupta's poor translation of partition-inspired Bengali poetry loses even the rootedness of the original language).

Partha Chatterjee's comparison of the two partitions of Bengal in 1905 (which was reversed in six years as a result of Congress pressure) and 1947 is more case-specific than the others. But even Chatterjee is looking primarily at the dynamics of Hindu-Muslim relationship, the construction of identity between two events and two communities. It is an analysis that could apply universally, not just to Punjab, but to the former Yugoslavia as well. Like Chatterjee, most of the authors in this volume are close to the subaltern school of historiography. They are influenced by Foucault's narrative and genealogical histories, and Edward Said's revenge-of-the-empire scholarship. Their project should not have been universalist. Instead, it should have celebrated the particular, the subaltern, the forgotten story of Bengal. While the act of writing the story of Bengal's partition is itself a subaltern expression—especially when the western partition has so completely dominated popular discourse—the failure to investigate the reasons for this differentiation undermines the effort.

Perhaps, a volume as quickly slapped together as this one cannot be all that it could be. And certainly, the scholarship, within the limits that it sets for itself, is noteworthy. Chatterjee revisits his work in the *Nation and Its Fragments* to reach the conclusion that religion was a critical factor in Bengal's second partition. That might seem an obvious statement considering that Pakistan was created as a Muslim state,

but Chatterjee is contradicting the main thrust of post-independence constructivism undertaken by the Indian state and its Marxist collaborators in the academe. He shows that there was a popular and elite constituency for partition in 1946–47. Chatterjee also stands against the larger modernization-developmental theories that parallelize economic development and governance issues. The power of the modernization argument can be witnessed, as Chatterjee points out, in the fact that of hundred-odd new states that came into existence between 1945–1990, just two—Israel and Pakistan—were explicitly 'religious.' There were many more states where religion was a significant issue of identity, but belief in a God was not an expressed characteristic of citizenship. Obviously, Europe's enlightenment and secularism had visited the rest of the world. Though by no means new or as comprehensive as it should be, the most forward-looking work in the volume are Bhaumik's and Samaddar's. Bhaumik has covered the Northeast for years on behalf of the BBC. Some of the implications of Bhaumik's article are interesting. First, within the mainstream discourse on partition, we often miss the point that Pakistan and Assam were twins, born of the same process. If Muslims took advantage of British withdrawal to create a nation for themselves, however short-lived, it also gave the Assamese the chance to throw off Bengali domination. Second, the process of partitioning would reiterate itself over the years creating the 'seven sisters' out of the single state of Assam. It is likely that this disintegrative process will continue further as the Kuki-Naga conflict becomes so acute that partition remains the only solution. The third point is the recognition of the fact that the government of free India, not unlike the 'capricious' British, has time and again used partition to resolve ethnic, linguistic, and religious issues. The irony of free India's policies and the hypocrisy of an official story that decries the British for partitioning India, however, is not even recognized in academic historiography, let alone incorporated in the popular narrative.

Samaddar's more comprehensive piece on the continuing flow of migrants from the East to West Bengal is illuminating. The fact that these are not Hindu refugees, but Muslim migrants looking for better lives makes it a political issue of explosive potential. To an extent, the BJP has played the card of illegal immigrants (same as the Republican Party scares Americans with visions of Mexican leeching and eventual takeover of the United States.) In present-day Assam, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh illegal migration is

*Perhaps, a volume as quickly slapped together as this one cannot be all that it could be. And certainly, the scholarship, within the limits that it sets for itself, is noteworthy. Chatterjee revisits his work in the Nation and Its Fragments to reach the conclusion that religion was a critical factor in Bengal's second partition. That might seem an obvious statement considering that Pakistan was created as a Muslim state, but Chatterjee is contradicting the main thrust of post-independence constructivism undertaken by the Indian state and its Marxist collaborators in the academe.*

the predominant political issue, surpassing even the calls for independence from India. Indian cities under migrant Muslim 'siege,' have become viciously right-wing. Bombay and Delhi are very good examples. Until recently, Calcutta (and West Bengal) had been a safe haven for Muslim migrants because they voted en masse for the secular Marxists. In the last elections, even discounting the Mamata-effect, the city (and the state) had moved towards the BJP.

I think it was Jairam Ramesh who, in a column years ago, pioneered the concept of EoK—East of Kanpur. If you drew a straight line south from Kanpur right through the middle of the Indian peninsula, Ramesh explained, you got two different countries. West of Kanpur was a booming country on the threshold of becoming an Asian tiger. EoK, on the other side, was a gigantic economic mess. Easterners have dealt with the reality of their Fourth World lives in the easiest possible way—by moving West. The migration from Bangladesh—a considerable number actually destined for Pakistan—fits this general pattern. Thousands of young Bengalis have moved to Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, anywhere, so that they could make a living. Would this be another cause for regionalism in the future? Would the Shiv Sena pioneer this political issue too?

Samaddar tries to maintain a certain sense of balance when he describes the rare move eastwards. West Bengali Muslims have often used Bangladesh's more generous visa quotas to go further west, to the Middle East, and even to New York. Though Samaddar does not mention this, a large number of India's garment exporters have moved East to use Bangladeshi quotas under the worldwide Multi-fiber Agreement to expand their business. I want to go East, but not forever. I want to see the Bhuinya Bari, my ancestral home, to find out if indeed there is some truth in my grandmother's stories. But Qais Ahmed's story in the book of his visit to

the ancestral home of the famous Bengali writer Manik Bandyopadhyay is an effective dissuader. It is a classic tale of migration and abandonment, almost Manto-like in its narrative, that will resonate in Punjab and everywhere else where politics has divided peoples. It gives us nostalgia and reality, the split between memory and migration that provides the grist for refugee stories. Pradip Kumar Bose's exploration of memory and history verges on the trite but is nonetheless useful because the truth about the partition, despite the many embellishments, is carried by people like my grandmother, and passed down to their grandchildren. In conjunction with Sandip Bandyopadhyay's exploration of the selective memories of the Bengali Hindus (a phenomenon that would have paralleled the Sikh/Hindu experience in Punjab) it provides, when extrapolated to the present, some of the fundamental reasons for Hindu revivalism. *Tamas* and *Buniyaad* actually feed into the official Indian story about the futility and the tragedy of partition. They are narratives that refuse to recognize the constituency for partition. My grandmother's stories are more true because she says she fled Muslim persecution. The swamiji's story is more true because the monks did take their swords to thousands of Muslims' throats just as the Nihangs did in Punjab. In the end, and irrespective of the lies about land and property, irrespective of the suffering, there is a recognition of religion as the basic fact of partition, of subcontinental life. Unlike the official version, this is not a pretty picture of ourselves. It is hideous, ugly, but that is what we are. It is not only hypocritical to pretend otherwise, but also politically explosive. The sooner we confront our demons, the quicker we will exorcise them.

*Sunil Dasgupta is currently working for a Ph.D. in the Department of Political Science, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Champaign.*



# On Redefining Development Economics

C.P. Chandrasekhar

ANALYTICAL DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS: THE LESS DEVELOPED ECONOMY REVISITED

By Kaushik Basu

Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1998, pp. xix+366, Rs. 495.00

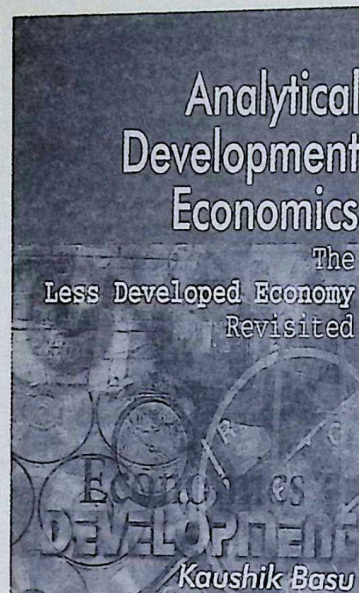
Until quite recently, 'neoclassical' development economists treated the problems of the poorest nations of the world as being a special instance of the consequences of the deviation of real economies from the 'ideal' benchmark of a perfectly competitive, Walrasian economy. Intervention by post-colonial governments seeking to accelerate the growth of per capita incomes, it was argued, generated distortions or deviations from a competitive framework that resulted in a misallocation of scarce resources and bred inefficiency. The resulting loss of surplus, which it was presumed is always automatically invested, results in lower growth in these economies, condemning them to backwardness. It is this perspective, backed by the international financial institutions, that won for itself the title of mainstream development economics.

During the years when this 'marketist' perspective rose to domi-

nance in the practice of development economics, much was happening within neoclassical theory itself. Microeconomic theory was, according to some, being transformed by a 'revolution' involving "the abandonment of the simple world of Walrasian general equilibrium in favour of a richer world of imperfect information, incomplete markets, unenforceable contracts, costly transactions, and strategic interaction". There has also been a revival of interest in growth theory, triggered by the efforts to endogenize a wider range of variables that were not accommodated in the early growth models.

The book under review, which is a revised and extended version of the author's *The Less Developed Economy: A Critique of Contemporary Theory*, is an attempt to use these new developments in theory to 'formalize' some of the propositions of traditional development economics, as well as to elucidate and extend recent contributions informed by the new developments in neoclassical theory. The result is a lucidly written, often deceptively simple, tract that comprehensively surveys and at times advances what has been described by economists of a neoclassical persuasion as a revival in development theory.

Given its subject matter, which is circumscribed by the specific problems that are seen as being amenable to analysis with the tools of the new, neoclassical economics, Kaushik Basu's book is an eclectic tour of various 'issues' drawn either from the staple of traditional development economics or from empirical experience. The issues dealt with vary from 'macro' ones like the vicious circle doctrine, the determinants of inflation and unemployment and the external debt problem, to more specific puzzles, especially in the agricultural sector, which are amenable to analysis with the tools at hand. With evidence of interlinked (land, labour,



credit and product) markets and of an inverse relationship between size and productivity having provided many such puzzles, it is not surprising that an analysis of the 'Rural Economy', which indeed is the backbone of developing economies, occupies a third of the manuscript. The final result is a book which not merely provides an extremely useful survey of the new, neoclassical development economics for students of the subject, but also serves as a knowledgeable guide to researchers seeking to make use of or critically engage with what is definitely a far more serious effort on the part of neoclassical economists to come to terms with the special problems of developing countries.

There are many insights which derive from the new neoclassical development economics, even for those not too comfortable with the assumptions and framework of its analysis. For example, even if the analysis of why international bankers lend to developing countries and why the latter choose to borrow which is based on the maximization of a set of inadequately specified (but well behaved) utility functions may not appeal to many, the discussion does yield interesting insights into the determinants of the herd-instinct that characterizes lenders and triggers financial crises in developing countries, or into the widely observed problem of loan-pushing. There are other areas such as the argument on the vicious circle, where Basu's use of equilibrium analysis helps elucidate the conditions under which such an argument can be feasibly held. Above all, there are occasions such as the analysis of 'structural inflation' and its relationship with Kalecki's non-neoclassical framework

of mark-up pricing, when Basu steps beyond his chosen 'subject', to provide a useful survey. It is, however, unfortunate that the discussion on inflation in developing country contexts ends with the blanket judgement that for a fuller explanation we need not just structuralism, but, its opposite, monetarism, as well. An unacceptable marriage of that kind is hardly convincing, and Basu's case may have been better served by focussing on the ways (such as the effects on commodity speculation of a liquidity overhang) in which money does matter.

This tendency to treat what are traditionally considered 'theoretical opposites' in terms that are both mutually compatible and equally relevant in explaining real-world phenomena and in seeking new policy directions, has a more basic origin. In Basu's view, it is one of the outcomes of the emergence of the new, neoclassical development economics, which is not just a direct and 'natural' descendant of traditional development economics, but is in fact a substantial development of the latter. The new development economics has, according to him, two advantages. First, unlike the traditional development economics, which raised innumerable questions and had answers for very few, 'recent development economics' sets itself more realistic targets. Thus, an eclectic choice of issues is viewed as a virtue rather than a limitation of the method of analysis. Second, through the increasing use of rigorous analysis, the 'new development economics' is seen as blurring the distinction between development economics and theory, so that the former is no longer "practised in the periphery". The second of these arguments once again attempts to advance the view that any system of theory that dominates the debate at a particular point in time in the centres of world capitalism is both correct and needs to be integrated. To many concerned with the persisting subjugation in less visible forms of the developing countries by the developed centres of world capitalism, one of the virtues of the traditional development economics is the fact that it refused to integrate with the mainstream theory at the centre, on the grounds that it was a part of the ideological baggage that legitimized international hegemony. So there would be many, at least within the borders of the less-developed world, who may not share Basu's enthusiasm for integration.

Perhaps to strengthen his case, Basu extends his argument on the nature and role of theory even further. According to him, economic theory is a 'single,' neutral set of rigorous techniques which enhances the analysis of

*Given its subject matter, which is circumscribed by the specific problems that are seen as being amenable to analysis with the tools of the new, neoclassical economics, Kaushik Basu's book is an eclectic tour of various 'issues' drawn either from the staple of traditional development economics or from empirical experience.*



*The inability of mainstream theory to understand the laws of accumulation and growth in the specific structural context of the developing countries does not mean that there are no efforts outside mainstream theory that have made a contribution to the field or that growth is not the central issue in development economics.*

any problem at hand. Further, resorting to a marriage between the current version of mainstream theory and issues in development, does not dissociate the main concerns of the 'new development economics' from that which has ostensibly been practised in the periphery.

On both these counts, Basu is quite candid. First, in a return to the questionable (and much questioned) distinction between 'positive' and 'normative' economics, he suggests that "conflicts between different schools of thought are often necessarily heightened because of our tendency to read into analyses prescriptions that are not there". New developments in theory appear to merely deliver a set of results. How we interpret them and draw prescriptive conclusions lies beyond the immediate pale of economics. For example, he believes that the neoclassical claim that workers are paid their marginal product, which can be disputed only on empirical grounds, is objected to by those of a different persuasion on the grounds that it presumes that "workers get what they deserve". The possibility that underlying that claim is a theory of distribution which conflicts with the theories held by those of a different persuasion, does not figure at all. Such reasoning obviously allows Basu to draw the conclusion that "there is greater harmony than is apparent in the diverse strains of thought that have gone into the analysis of underdevelopment".

Second, while admitting that the new development economics is less concerned with the process of development than with "the problems and structure of underdevelopment", Basu argues that this is not because long-run growth is not "very important", but because

"we still do not understand its mechanics very well". This comes through in the discussion on 'Growth and Development', which is more a useful survey of elements of theory in the area, than a discussion of relevance to the special problems of developing countries. The inability of mainstream theory to understand the laws of accumulation and growth in the specific structural context of the developing countries does not mean that there are no efforts outside mainstream theory that have made a contribution to the field or that growth is not the central issue in development economics. To those who adhere to traditions derived from Smith, Ricardo and Marx and for the followers of Schumpeter, such a characterization would neither be fully acceptable nor would it be ground enough for shifting the focus of development economics away from its original project.

Traditionally, the point of departure for development economics was the striking economic distance between rich and poor nations. This sub-field within economics as a discipline was concerned with explaining this distance, analyzing its consequences for growth and well-being within the less-developed countries, and examining the possibility, under alternative regimes, of it being bridged. Seen in this light, Nurkse's emphasis on the possibilities of using surplus rural labour as a means of raising the rate of accumulation and growth without running up against the wage goods constraint, was a far more significant contribution to the discipline than concepts such as the vicious circle or balanced growth. Central to development economics, therefore, is an analysis of the structural and other features of the typical less-developed economy which favoured or militated against growth. Based on such an analysis, economists of both liberal and radical persuasions identified the emergence and persistence, if not reproduction, of backwardness, as being the consequence of structures, within the developing countries themselves and in the world economic system, created in the course of integration of the present-day backward economies into the world capitalist system, most often under colonial regimes. The failure of these economies to 'catch up' was, therefore, traced to their inability to reshape these structures, or at least overcome the debilitating consequences of some of them. Given this dynamic and structural core of the subject, 'neo-classical' descendants of the marginalist revolution in economics, who were concerned more with static allocation problems than with growth, till recently had little to contribute to the subject. It was not the failure of development eco-

nomics to integrate that left it in the 'periphery', but the inability of mainstream theory to accommodate its concerns.

Does the willingness of the new development economics to 'sacrifice' growth questions also stem from a similar inability, which forces it to divert the focus of concern away from the central issues of development to more microeconomic issues analysed in a dominantly static framework? Whatever Basu's answer may be, the argument remains that the 'new development economics' is not carrying forward in a new and rigorous fashion the concerns of the 'traditional development economics', but changing the fo-

cus of what is termed development economics. That, however, does not undermine its importance as an attempt by the theoretically more honest mainstream economists to make a foray into problems which, even if not always specific to the less developed countries, are more preponderant in such contexts. The issue to be confronted is whether the framework of analysis adopted limits the scope of that effort. And the danger to be avoided is that in the name of setting realistic targets that effort is aborted.

*C.P. Chandrasekhar, Professor in Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.*

## New Releases



**Popular  
prakashan**

35-C, Pt. M.M. Malaviya Mg., Popular Press Bldg. Tardeo, Mumbai 400 034

### TURBULENT TIMES

*India 1940-44*

Biswamoy Pati (Ed.)

81-7154-834-2

Rs. 300.00

### THE FIERY QUILL

*Nationalism and Literature in Maharashtra*

B.G. Gokhale

81-7154-805-9 Rs. 275.00

### CONTEMPORARY INDIA

*G.R. Bhatkal Memorial Lectures 1975-95*

Sadanand Bhatkal (Ed.)

81-7154-559-9

Rs. 300

### THE MEANING OF THE AMBEDKARITE CONVERSION TO BUDDHISM AND OTHER ESSAYS

K.N. Kadam

81-7154-810-5 Rs. 200

Sales Offices: Bhatkal Books International

\*4648/1 Ansari Rd., 21, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002. Tel. No. : 3280068

\*16, Southern Avenue, Calcutta 700 026, Tel. No. : 466 0812

\*Saraswati Mandir, Kennedy Bridge, Gr. floor, Mumbai 400 007. Tel. No. : 3879402



# A Grandstand View of Economic History

Ashok V. Desai

COLONIALISM, PROPERTY AND THE STATE

By Dharma Kumar

Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998, pp. viii+383, Rs. 595.00

**P**rofessor Dharma Kumar recently completed a long innings as professor of economic history at Delhi School of Economics; her stint as editor of the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, which she founded, still continues. These positions have given her a grandstand view of Indian economic history for over three decades. The present book is a collection of essays she has written since 1981—11 published or presented in seminars, four unpublished—and covers the wide canvas of her interests.

They are divided into five parts. First come two papers on the Madras Presidency, on which Kumar wrote her Ph.D. thesis and in which she has maintained an interest. Next there are four papers on issues related to land. Five papers that follow compare regional and national economies. Then come three papers related to her original research papers on British India. The collection is rounded up by an assault on left secularist historians.

In the paper on "Land Ownership and Inequality in Madras Presidency, 1853–1947" Kumar takes up districtwise data on the size of holdings and the size of pattas (i.e., of land held by a single owner for the purpose of paying land revenue), and fits Lorenz curves to them. The distributions became more equal in some districts and less in others; for the entire presidency they changed little. Kumar uses this evidence to throw doubt on the view that inequality must have increased under the colonial government. The evidence is, as she points out, not conclusive; evidence on holdings tells us nothing about the ownership pattern since an owner can own a number of plots, and records of pattas were inaccurate because owners often failed to get transfers recorded. Still, Kumar eliminates a major possible source of evidence for growing inequality.

In the paper on "The Forgotten Sector" Kumar investigates services in Madras Presidency in the first half of the nineteenth century. The first census

was held in 1872. Before that there are only the statistical collections of that remarkable traveller, Francis Buchanan, also known as Hamilton, which have attracted the labours of many recent historians. Buchanan published *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* in 1801. He would go into a village, call the headman and get him to collect a few villagers; his data was obtained from enquiries addressed to this select crowd through interpreters. The results are quaint; they give rare insight into the precolonial, preindustrial society. Thus one of the numerous village officials was a *tarugaru* or *udaca* who would "bustle among the farmers and call them to work." This is not fiction; I have myself been to villages in Bihar in 1966 where villagers were hauled out of their huts and hustled to work in the landlord's fields. There were few lawyers, but many doctors; one village had an eye doctor as well as a pediatrician. There were actors, storytellers, clowns, rope and snake dancers, jugglers, conjurers, singers and temple dancers. This is not very solid history, but nevertheless fascinating.

The paper on "Land Fragmentation" starts with a well established fact that Indian farmers typically hold land in multiple fragments; economists consider it axiomatic that consolidation of

*Kumar's attack on Left secularist historians is especially ironic, since she is defiantly secular, and an atheist. But she disagrees with the omnibus Left secularist thesis that Hindus and Muslims lived in harmony till the British came and made them colonial, and that Hindu communalism is today's foremost danger.*

## COLONIALISM, PROPERTY AND THE STATE

Dharma Kumar

holdings would raise the productivity of land as well as labour. Fragmentation is supposed to be related to population pressure, but it also enables farmers to spread risks by owning a number of varieties of land. Kumar surveys some variants and alternatives to fragmentation prevalent in Malaysia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka before coming to two hypotheses: that consolidation is prevented because villagers have imperfect information about the quality of others' holdings, and because they hold land as a saleable asset, and not just a means of livelihood.

There are three papers on the concept of property in land. Poor countries display a considerable variety of types of land ownership as well as of usufructuary rights. The confusion multiplies when one goes into history. Kumar goes into some detail on the complex relationships in the Chola kingdom, which obtained in southern India between 850 and 1280, between land, the king, holders of usufructuary rights, communal assemblies, and large landholders—who could justly be called owners, except that modern law of property did not exist then. On this, Kumar's conclusions are understandably tentative: it goes little beyond the assertion that the law that ruled was not the law of the jungle.

It has been the contention of the Aligarh school that the Mughals collected a very high proportion—close to a half of farm output in taxes. There is evidence that the British Indian government collected much less—3.5 per cent of gross agricultural output—in the first half of this century (p. 219). One of two things must be true. Either the British drastically reduced the tax rates, either on taking over or later. Or the Aligarh school is wrong about the actual share of taxes in farm output in

Mughal times. Kumar believes the latter, and puts it forward in a number of contexts. It occurs in a comparison of the colonial regimes in India and Indonesia, and again later in a discussion whether the British colonial government was a "predatory state". This part of a broader polemic against left secularist historians, to whom Kumar devotes her last paper. She attributes them the view that pre-British India was "secular"—that in practice, Hindus and Muslims coexisted in amity and that the British introduced communal conflict to divide their subjects. This taken together, Kumar is engaged in war with Left secularists on several fronts.

Such extensive wars are seldom decisively won on all fronts, least of all by a lone warrior like Kumar. On some of the issues, Kumar has borrowed rather damp ammunition. Thus, for instance, Kumar cites some historians who have estimated lower figures of Mughal agricultural taxation than Aligarh taxation. This question cannot be settled by setting one historian's estimate against another. The textual evidence is in favour of the Aligarh school; Kumar believes that Mughal texts exaggerate the tax collections. The way to get better answers would be to collect figures of actual revenue collections, and relate them to estimates of agricultural output. The latter estimates are the key. On the basis of Abul Fazal's figures in the *Ain-e-Akbari*, I had shown, in IESHS 1968 that yields in Akbar's India were considerably higher than yields in 1961–62. The Aligarh school found this inconvenient; Shireen Moosvi wrote an entire Ph.D. dissertation to prove me wrong. But her proof was simply that my estimates were implausible and must be scaled down, which she arbitrarily proceeded to do. I gave reasons why yields were higher; namely that land under cultivation was a fraction of what it is now and hence comparable to the best land under cultivation now, and that owing to the greater extent of forests and vegetation, the supply of water to crops over the growing season was better. If the yields were substantially higher in Mughal India, a higher proportion of taxes to output was also feasible. However, Kumar either forgot my estimates or did not believe them, and thus missed a way of coming to terms with the Aligarh school. Reality is seldom so simple as historians make it. No doubt some farmers—for instance those located in the fertile north Indian valleys, close to the rulers' capitals—paid high taxes most of the time; others further away probably paid taxes less regularly or frequently, and received periodic punishment in the form of raids by imperial forces. Still others, who



This book is excellent, sometimes very witty polemics: it takes up a series of "establishment" positions and pummels them energetically. One cannot help the feeling sometimes that Kumar's artillery is not particularly heavy; sometimes she reuses spent cartridges.

## Sir, Our Country has a Tradition\*

Vasanth Kannabiran

BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES: WOMEN IN INDIA'S PARTITION

By Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin

Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 274, Rs. 300.00

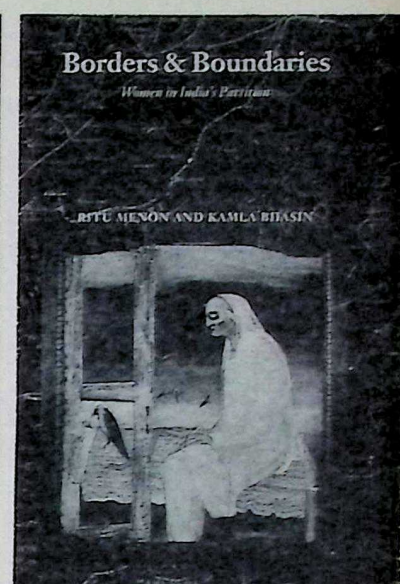
*Overriding all these was a violence that was horrifying in its intensity, one which knew no boundaries; for many women it was not only miscreants, outsiders or marauding mobs they needed to fear—husbands, fathers, brothers and even sons could turn killers. That terrible stunning violence and the silencing pall that descended like a shroud over it have always just hovered at the edges of history; breaking the silence has exposed not only the cracks in family mythologies about honour and sacrifice, but the implicit consensus that prevails around permissible violence against women during periods of highly charged communal conflict.*

Rarely does one come across a book that is difficult indeed to read, (lines that grip your gut and rock your very being with a nausea that threatens to erupt of molten anger and fear) and is also difficult to put down as you grapple with the meaning of family, community and state for women sifting ideas and insights which surface from the sense of pain and betrayal that clots the history of women. What has freedom meant for women? What does it mean today? And how does one map the contours of the skewed relationship women bear to nationality and citizenship? Of women's role when ethnic, communal or national identities are re-arbitrated? Menon and Bhasin search precisely these meanings in their significant history of women in India's partition. And as we follow them through the maze of historical facts, feelings of betrayal and calm resignation that fill the intense pages of this book, we begin to understand as the authors put it how women's histories interrogate not only the histories we know but how we know them.

Initially conceived as a three country oral history of women's experience of partition in 1947, *Borders and Boundaries* looks at the question of belonging and how it polarizes choice and alle-

giance for women. From this history that leaves the reader aghast at how simply women can be dispensed with six themes emerge: violence; abduction and recovery; widowhood; rehabilitation; rebuilding and belonging. And each chapter unravels the relationships between women, religious community and the state within and across nations, between women and family; between women and their men and women and their country. And in the course of this

*Looking at the women who were abducted and the meaning of abduction and recovery one realizes the material, symbolic and political significance of abduction in free India. The restoration of Hindu women was the bringing home of Sita—a moral duty inherited by the descendants of Ram. And inevitably followed by the burning alive of Sita. A tradition of our country.*



unravelling The figure of the abducted woman became symbolic of crossing borders, of violating social, cultural and political boundaries.

The history throws up the bizarre fact that what happens to women in moments of rupture and dislocation is the other side of what happens to them in periods of calm. And the fact that the violence in times of conflict is part of a continuum and a consensus that encompasses this violence. A consensus which while sanctioning a violent resolution of women's sexuality simultaneously insists on women's silence regarding it.

In the first chapter "Speaking for Themselves" Menon and Bhasin raise the problem of disentangling women's experiences from those of other political non-actors so as to problematize the general experience of violence, dislocation and displacement from a gender perspective.

All life lines are broken at some point or another. Personal tragedy, an irreparable loss, a natural disaster or cataclysmic historical moment shape lives in ways that are forever marked by that event. Our concern in speaking to women about how they experience the Partition of India was two-fold: first, to see how the lives of those who are non-actors in the political realm are shaped by an epochal event, and how their experience of it enables a critique of political history and the means of writing it differently. Second, to study a time marked by massive disruption and crises through life-stories that would, both, bear witness and allow us to attempt a gendered social history.

\* Shibban Lal Saksena, Constituent Assembly Debates.



*The sanctity of hearth and home, community and nation depends on the stern defense of women's bodies, a defence which includes the right to destroy these offending bodies. And abducted women were not perceived or defined as citizens but as missing members of religious and cultural community to be restored to the community regardless of choices.*

Using a combination of commentary and analysis, narrative and testimony the authors counterpoint documented history with personal testimony. A juxtaposition which calls into question the telling of history itself and imbuing this knowledge with experience fosters the understanding that meanings are never settled. At least not meanings that centre around women's lives. Looking at the women who were abducted and the meaning of abduction and recovery one realizes the material, symbolic and political significance of abduction in free India. The restoration of Hindu women was the bringing home of Sita—a moral duty inherited by the descendants of Ram. And inevitably followed by the burning alive of Sita. A tradition of our country. A collective memory that made the recovering of women a sacred responsibility. And one that sanctioned the use of force if Sita dared to be secular, dared to differ from her protector and rescuer.

Are women ever allowed free choice? A choice that is freely exercised? Can secularity be contaminated by sexuality? These are questions that rise up before us as we see instance after instance of women being physically cut away from the offending but functional arrangements that had been entered and relocated within a "real" family and community where her sexuality could be properly supervised. And the role of the state as father-patriarch reinforcing official kinship relations becomes clearer. And we see clearly how critical women are as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups. The sanctity of hearth and home, community and nation depends on the stern defense of women's bodies, a defence which includes the right to destroy these offending bodies. And abducted women were not perceived or defined as citizens but as missing members of religious and cultural community to be restored to the community regardless of choices. Or to be

locked out of offending sight when the community would not accept them. And so while women were unwanted they still had to be "rescued" and recovered.

Dealing with the scale of widowhood in 1947–48 the state was forced to shoulder the social and economic responsibility for "unattached" women—the widows. And the significance of this move in terms of the state was that it had a dual function of custodian and guardian of the women and of a benign agency that would not subscribe to or reinforce the strong traditional biases against women. As widows are assumed to be sexually inactive, while the fear of sexual exploitation was implicit there was a need to liberate them from the cultural stigma of widowhood and resurrect them as economic beings and part of the mainstream of national life. With widows the issue of citizenship which is so contorted in the case of abducted women becomes far simpler. Widows could simply be defined as victims of a national disaster to be rehabilitated as citizens in their own community. And one sees clearly the often contradictory relation between women and the state which is sometimes cooperative on issues of welfare and conflictual on issues of rights.

As one enters deeper into this world of borders and boundaries question after question surfaces to haunt and torture us like the women who people the book. And the emotion it rouses is not for a distant past, not a gentle sorrow or great grief for women who have suffered and gone or linger. It is concern that is essentially selfish and focussed at our own existence as women, as citizens and members of a community. Each moment documented in the book reverberates right through these fifty years into the present. And the echoes of the answers to these questions come back to us from the act of establishing borders and restoring "order" across the length and breadth of the world inspiring on our survival.

Particularly relevant today is the whole issue of women's citizenship and the consistency with which women's fundamental rights are swiftly subsumed by culture and community. And whether we can continue to allow the identity of a religious and ethnic community to subordinate all other identities—whether gender, class, caste or region. It is these questions that *Borders and Boundaries* insists on our confronting and the failure to do so can erode a lot of spaces we as women have struggled over the years to gain.

*Vasanth Kannabiran is a feminist activist and writer based in Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh.*

## Engendering Childhood

Nandini Chandra

LOVED AND UNLOVED: THE GIRL CHILD IN THE FAMILY

Edited by Jasodhara Bagchi, Jaba Guha and Piyali Sengupta

Stree Publications, Calcutta, 1977, p. 212, Rs. 250.00

The book as the title suggests is about the precarious existence of the girl child in the family. That is why perhaps, it is dedicated to the girl child of the 'future' whose condition it is hoped would no longer be as endangered. According to the authors of the book, the fact that the girl child remains a drudge, is kept illiterate, fed inadequately and married off early in order to maintain the family status as well as to provide for its future shows that even after fifty years of Independence, 'the natural claim to childhood for most of our girl children' is not guaranteed. Implicit in this is the agenda that the girl child, having been so far denied childhood should be given the status of a child. In other words then, as the subject in question doesn't enjoy the status of a child, the term 'girl child' is a contradiction.

Even as an attempt is made to understand the term historically, the authors fail to clarify exactly what is desired for their so-called girl child, to discuss the contradictions thrown by it or to even problematize it in the first place. Apparently drawn from 19th century reformist debates, its legacy goes back to the 'shishukanya' who emerged in the middle-class consciousness of Bengal as the main victim of barbaric social practices like female infanticide, child marriage and sati.

While these debates recast the identity of the newly emerging middle-class women as an icon of the authentic Indian tradition, a social space is simultaneously created to accommodate the girl child. According to Bagchi, "the middle-class construct of the girl child as 'khukumani' meant that she must be both liberated as a child and committed to the domestic virtues for which her life was a long preparation." It was as if she was brought up on a principle of equality with the 'khokababu' or boy child. What was emphasized instead was a feminine code of dressing up games and stories suitable for would-be *bhadramahilas*. Since the 70s, the UN years of the Family and Women and the 90s, the SAARC decade of the Girl Child, the term has gained widespread popularity. To that extent, the term is more of a wish and a political agenda than an accurate description of the present status of girls, at least as far as the data given in the book is to go by. 'Let the girl also be a child'. The wish one'd think is for a more equal sharing of privileges on the one hand and a minimizing of divisions based on gender on the other. In short for a childhood as much engendered as ungendered. Instead, the unquestioning use of the term here seems to imply that childhood is a natural state. However, unlike infancy, childhood is

*The introduction by Jasodhara Bagchi begins by questioning the very premise of this book, i.e., Why does this book speak of the girl and not of the child, whether boy or girl? But the question proves to be a rhetorical one and it is not really addressed beyond a reference to the ill-fed, ill-clad boys who work in the innumerable tea stalls, canteens and small, dingy karkhanas that litter the slums of Calcutta. Add to this category the regular domestic help, the dalit, the various victims of sexual abuse and the case of discrimination against boys is equally strong.*



*The book is part of the national project on the Girl Child and the Family sponsored by the Indian Government that was carried out by the 22 women's studies centres, located in different regions. A survey based, collaborative, research-cum-action project, it aims to generate comparative data on the condition of the girl child that would help to improve planning and implementation of programmes.*

not a biological given. It is recognized more as a set of rights and privileges for a certain age group deriving from a liberal ideology than an inborn trait. According to Phillipe Aries (*Centuries of Childhood*), childhood is a 19th century European invention that accompanied the rise of the bourgeois family. For example, in the middle ages children were treated as mini adults. In a Hindu context, Sudhir Kakar's seminal study on childhood (*Inner World*) reveals that unlike in the West, the child here was protected, indulged in and nurtured for a long time. But he also adds that this omnibus reference to the child excludes most girls generally and boys from the lower caste. In a historic sense then, it would be more appropriate to have the suffix 'child' after boys, to emphasize their differentiated and rather special status.

The introduction by Jasodhara Bagchi begins by questioning the very premise of this book, i.e., Why does this book speak of the girl and not of the child, whether boy or girl? But the question proves to be a rhetorical one and it is not really addressed beyond a reference to the ill-fed, ill-clad boys who work in the innumerable tea stalls, canteens and small, dingy *karkhanas* that litter the slums of Calcutta. Add to this category the regular domestic help, the dalit, the various victims of sexual abuse and the case of discrimination against boys is equally strong. This still doesn't do away with the systematic discrimination against girls practised right since birth defying the categories of class, caste, religion and the entire gamut of social practises that naturalize this deprivation. Thus the attempt here is to show the girl's place in the family, which traditionally has been viewed as a nurturing and protective institution.

The book breaks this myth and highlights 'the retrogressive forces that operate within and outside the family restricting the opportunities and choices open to the girl child (and hence to the woman)'.

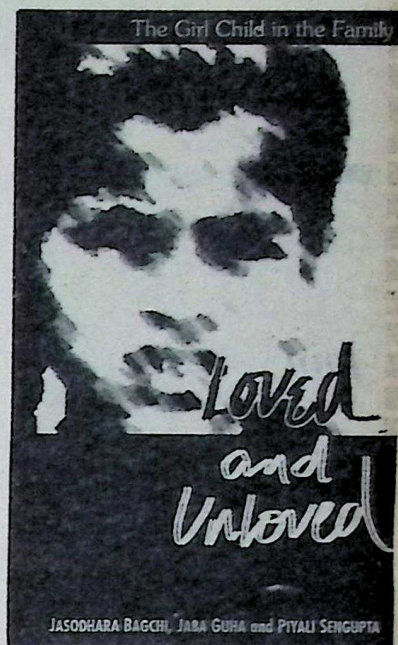
The book is part of the national project on the Girl Child and the Family sponsored by the Indian Government that was carried out by the 22 women's studies centres, located in different regions. A survey based, collaborative, research-cum-action project, it aims to generate comparative data on the condition of the girl child that would help to improve planning and implementation of programmes. The editors have used data from the survey in W. Bengal carried out by the School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University. Almost half the book is devoted to this data ever though on their own admission, it doesn't reveal any new insights, either because the respondents fit in their replies according to the assumptions and expectations implicit in the questionnaire or because they simply evade the questions. The 13 case studies that constitute the bulk of the remaining part of the book combines first hand interviews with brilliant analysis and makes for a very interesting read. The sample for this is drawn from a wide spectrum of 600 households cutting across region, caste, class, religion and the urban-rural divide. The target group consists of girls in the 7-18 years age group, covering four villages in two districts of W. Bengal and two urban wards in the city of Calcutta. In addition, it provides us with details about their daily activities, perceptions, ambitions and prospects. It supplements these with the profiles and ideas of their mothers or mother substitutes indicating if there have been significant changes from one generation to the other.

The very fact that the investigators of this particular project address the girl as a child subject seems to evoke a response from them that is child like. It is touching to find the girls lapping up

*...the attempt here is to show the girl's place in the family, which traditionally has been viewed as a nurturing and protective institution. The book breaks this myth and highlights 'the retrogressive forces that operate within and outside the family restricting the opportunities and choices open to the girl child...*

the attention showered on them by the didis from the cities and this clearly points to their otherwise neglected existence. It is not at all surprising to find that the majority of them have internalized the patriarchal logic that requires them to accept and justify their deprived lot, to work from daybreak till night and yet have their labour dismissed as unproductive, to drop out from school to accommodate and take care of male siblings, to not know the taste of milk as their share is put aside to make tea, to be branded inauspicious if not married within a certain age limit etc. Deprivation is not just on account of economic reasons. As the Profiles show, the gender stereotypes working in the urban middle class homes are not very different. For example Prabha, the bright girl from the well-educated family in Calcutta has clearly internalized her father's contempt for her mother. The young Muslim bride Sakina wants to have children in order to conform even though her mother-in-law counsels her against it and Shanti, the fiercely independent and idealistic woman who has so far roughed it out in the slums suddenly invests all her faith in the security of marriage to an already married man. These profiles or case studies are illuminating precisely because they do not lay the blame on parents, however cruel or unthinking they may seem but try and locate the reasons for this situation in wider social processes.

There are exceptions of course. The three exceptional cases of the study are to be found in non-Hindu and more or less women dominated households. The Santhal girl, Maya and the Muslim girl, Majida embody the positive potential of the girl child, defying constructions of femininity and living life on their findings. However this optimism needs to be tempered with a critical examination of the stereotypes perpetuated by the present education system. It is simplistic to suggest that education holds the key to emancipation. While most girls, when asked what they think of education felt that it helped them to gain knowledge, to cope better



in life and articulate things better. At the same time it is obvious that the reason for not linking up with career options is an index of their acceptance of the limited social space available to them. The book concludes with a thrust on making education job oriented as far as women are concerned. In its participative approach, it transcends the academic constraints that bind such projects by helping their respondents with some extra classes, story telling sessions, providing books for their libraries, giving the panchayats suggestions regarding the use of funds allocated for women, conducting health camps and generally leaving an impact that will not be momentary only.

On the whole a very useful document even as it reiterates things that are already well known. This is because it tackles the how of the problem rather than the why and in a way that incorporates solutions that are hard to come by if one attempts at explanations only.

Nandini Chandra is a Research Scholar at CLE, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

### Attention Subscribers

If you wish to order titles from TBR Book Club, please make sure that the enclosures include: the coupon page from TBR with your order neatly marked; a cheque or draft made out to The Book Review Literary Trust for the exact amount.

Mail your order to:  
TBR Book Club  
23 Vasant Enclave  
New Delhi - 110 057



# TBR Book Club

## HERE'S HOW YOU BENEFIT

- No membership fee. New titles will be on offer regularly. Get your copy of *The Book Review* from your nearest dealer or write to the address below. All you have to do is tick the titles in the box provided, fill the coupon and mail the sheet with your payment.
- Get 20% discount on all titles on offer
- Select from seven new titles at a special price
- One year subscription to *The Book Review* at 10% discount
- No extra charges for packaging and postage
- Please note: All prices given in bold type are the special CLUB prices for TBR Book Club members
- This offer is open only to individual subscribers to *The Book Review*.

## Books on SPECIAL Offer

|                                                                                                       |                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harvest by Manjula Padmanabhan (Kali for Women)                              | Rs 120                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Katha Prize Stories Vol. 7 (Katha)                                           | Rs 188 (hb) Rs 131 (pb) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contemporary Art in Baroda<br>edited by Gulammohammed Sheikh (Tulika, Delhi) | Rs 1685                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under the Banyan Tree (set of 4 books) (Tulika, Madras)                      | Rs 180                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Story of a Panther by Mickey Patel (Ravi Dayal Publisher)                    | Rs 120                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscapes edited by Gita Wolf, illus. by children (Tara)                    | Rs 109                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodcut Prints of 19th Century Calcutta by A. Paul (Seagull)                 | Rs 140                  |

## TITLES ON OFFER

### KALI FOR WOMEN

|                                                                                                                                                       | List price | Club price |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stages: The Art and Adventures of Zohra Segal by Joan Erdman with Zohra Segal                                                | Rs 300     | Rs 240     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Revolutionary Life: Memoirs of a Political Activist by Lakshmi Sahgal                                                      | Rs 250     | Rs 200     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Partial Woman: A novel by Mina Singh                                                                                       | Rs 170     | Rs 136     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Anger of Aubergines: stories of women and food by Bulbul Sharma                                                          | Rs 130     | Rs 104     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship: Extracts from a Correspondence by Nayantra Sahgal and E.N. Mangal Rai                                          | Rs 225     | Rs 180     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representing the Body: Gender issues in Indian art edited by Vidya Dehejia                                                   | Rs 230     | Rs 184     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Crooked Line by Ismat Chughtai                                                                                           | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In Other Words: new writing by Indian women edited by Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon                                         | Rs 120     | Rs 96      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Slate of Life: an anthology of stories by Indian women                                                                   | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inner Spaces: new writing by women from Kerala edited by Urvashi Butalia and Ritu Menon                                      | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Heart Breaks Free and The Wild One by Ismat Chughtai                                                                     | Rs 80      | Rs 64      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The History of Doing: an illustrated account of movements for women's rights and feminism in India, 1800-1990 by Radha Kumar | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Quilt and Other Stories by Ismat Chughtai                                                                                | Rs 100     | Rs 80      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Touch Me, Touch-Me-Not: Women, Plants and Healing by Shodhini                                                                | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |

### MANOHAR PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS

|                                                                                                             | List price | Club price |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation by Gen. J.F.R. Jacob                         | Rs 400     | Rs 320     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tantra in Bengal: A Study in its Origin, Development and Influence by S.C. Banerji | Rs 350     | Rs 280     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music in India: The Classical Traditions by Bonnie C. Wade                         | Rs 350     | Rs 280     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding Ganapati: Insights Into the Dynamics of a Cult by Anita Raina Thapan | Rs 500     | Rs 400     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science: The Living Adventure Astronomy and Space by V.S. Ravi (PB)                | Rs 75      | Rs 60      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science: The Living Adventure The Meaning of Science by V.S. Ravi (PB)             | Rs 125     | Rs 100     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Grand Indian Tour: Travels and Sketches of Emily Eden by Jagmohan Mahajan      | Rs 450     | Rs 360     |

Join today and discover how you can avail of fantastic discounts on titles from Disha, Kali for Women, Katha, Ravi Dayal, Tara, Tulika, Manohar, Seagull, Popular, and many more...



# TBR Book Club

## TITLES ON OFFER

### RAVI DAYAL PUBLISHER

|                                                                                             | List price | Club price |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Beethoven among the Cows</i> by Rukun Advani                    | Rs 125     | Rs 100     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tara Lane</i> by Shama Futehally                                | Rs 90      | Rs 72      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In an Antique Land</i> by Amitav Ghosh                          | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i> by Amitav Ghosh                     | Rs 190     | Rs 152     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Looking Through Glass</i> by Mukul Keshavan                     | Rs 190     | Rs 152     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tale Danda</i> by Girish Karnad                                 | Rs 80      | Rs 64      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Anjolie Ela Menon Paintings in Private Collections</i> by Murti | Rs 1900    | Rs 1520    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Woman of Basrur</i> by Shivarama Karanth                    | Rs 140     | Rs 112     |

### TULIKA, Madras

|                                                                                                                                                                                         | List price | Club price |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ka Se Kapde Kaise?</i> (Hindi Alphabet Book) written & illustrated by Bindia Thapar                                                                         | Rs 135     | Rs 108     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Ekti Dokki</i> written by Sandhya Rao illustrated by Ranjan De                                                                                              | Rs 65      | Rs 52      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Eecha Poocha</i> written by Kala Sasikumar, illustrated by Ashok Rajagopalan                                                                                | Rs 65      | Rs 52      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Sorry, Best Friend!</i> edited by Gittha Hariharan & Shama Futehally                                                                                        | Rs 30      | Rs 24      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Read and Colour Series</i> (set of 4 books): The Story of Tipu Sultan, The Story of Rani of Jhansi, The Story of Dandi March, The Story of 15th August 1947 | Rs 160     | Rs 128     |

### KATHA

| Short Story Collections:                                                                        | List price hb/pb | Club price hb/pb |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Katha Prize Stories Vol 1-3</i>                                     | Rs 250/120       | 220/96           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Katha Prize Stories Vols 4&amp;6</i>                                | Rs 250/150       | 220/120          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>A Southern Harvest</i>                                              | Rs 250/125       | 220/100          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Visions-Revisions</i>                                               | Rs —/120         | —/96             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>A Unique Odyssey</i>                                                | Rs 250/120       | 220/96           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Masti</i>                                                           | Rs 200/—         | 160/—            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mauni</i>                                                           | Rs 250/—         | 220/—            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Vaikom Muhammad Basheer</i>                                         | Rs 200/—         | 160/—            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Yuva Katha Vol I to VIII</i>                                        | Rs —/30          | —/24             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Stree Katha</i> (Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi) | Rs —/90          | —/72             |

### POPULAR PRAKASHAN

|                                                                                       | List price | Club price |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In the Wonderland of Investment</i> by Shanbagh           | Rs 225     | Rs 180     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>How to Convert a Taxpayer into a Taxsaver</i> by Shanbagh | Rs 225     | Rs 180     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>How Copyright Works in Practice</i> by Thairani           | Rs 125     | Rs 100     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Helpful Hints</i> by Shenoy                               | Rs 80      | Rs 65      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History</i> by Thapar | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Safe Living</i> edited by Saraf                           | Rs 75      | Rs 60      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Bhagvad Gita for you and me</i> by Patwardhan             | Rs 50      | Rs 40      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Family Guide to HIV and AIDS</i> edited by Chowdhury      | Rs 35      | Rs 28      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rituals and Festivals</i> by Bapat                        | Rs 80      | Rs 65      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Saraswat Cookery</i> edited by Nadkarni                   | Rs 125     | Rs 100     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Soups Salads and Desserts</i> by Rao                      | Rs 95      | Rs 76      |

### STREE/SAMYA

|                                                                         | List price | Club price |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Of Women Caste</i> by Bagwe                 | Rs 250     | Rs 200     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Guilty Without Trial</i> by Sinha           | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Legally Dispossessed</i> by Mukhopadhyay    | Rs 180     | Rs 145     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Impermanence of Lies</i> by Jyotimoyee Devi | Rs 130     | Rs 104     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Why I am not a Hindu</i> by Ilaiah          | Rs 120     | Rs 96      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Women as Subjects</i> by Nita Kumar         | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Struggle against Violence</i> by Datar      | Rs 100     | Rs 80      |

## TBR Book Club

23 Vasant Enclave

New Delhi 110 057

Tel + Fax: 91-124-355500

Tel: 6142031, 6144805

- ☐ YES I would like to become a member of TBR Book Club  
☐ YES I would like to subscribe to The Book Review

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of titles ordered \_\_\_\_\_ (Tick in the boxes provided)

Amount remitted \_\_\_\_\_

DD/money order/Cheque no. \_\_\_\_\_

Please make out your cheques in the name of TBR Book Club, New Delhi  
 Please allow 30 days for processing order (45 days in case of payment by cheque).

### SEAGULL BOOKS

|                                                                                                 | List price | Club price |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mr Sapatnekar's Child &amp; Four Billion Forgetfuls</i> by M. Sathe | Rs 100     | Rs 80      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Time and Dreams</i> by John W. Hood                                 | Rs 175     | Rs 140     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Chakravayuha</i> by R. Thiyam                                       | Rs 225     | Rs 180     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Our Non-Veg Cow and other Stories</i> by M. Devi                    | Rs 140     | Rs 112     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Armenian Champa Tree</i> by M. Devi                             | Rs 90      | Rs 72      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Dust on the Road</i> by M. Devi                                     | Rs 275     | Rs 220     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mother of 1084</i> by M. Devi                                       | Rs 160     | Rs 128     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Rudali</i> by M. Devi                                               | Rs 175     | Rs 140     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Five Plays</i> by M. Devi                                           | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Breast Stories</i> by M. Devi                                       | Rs 175     | Rs 140     |

### TARA

|                                                                                                        | List price | Club price |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mahabharata I and II</i> written and illustrated by Samhita Arni           | Rs 300     | Rs 240     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Hungry Lion</i> adapted by Gita Wolf illustrated by Indrapramit Roy        | Rs 165     | Rs 132     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tiger on a Tree</i> written by Anushka Shankar illustrated by Pulak Biswas | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Child Art</i> written by Tarit Bhattacharjee illustrated by children       | Rs 175     | Rs 140     |

### DISHA

|                                                                                                | List price | Club price |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Green Gardener</i> by Jayanta Mahapatra                        | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Malabar Muslim Cookery</i> by Umi Abdulla                          | Rs 70      | Rs 56      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Eighteenth Parallel</i> by Ashokamitran                        | Rs 90      | Rs 72      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Goonam</i> by Coolie Doctor                                        | Rs 90      | Rs 72      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Disha Guides—Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Madras</i> (four-in-one) | Rs 145     | Rs 120     |

### TULIKA, Delhi

|                                                                                          | List price | Club price |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Essays in Indian History</i> by Irfan Habib                  | Rs 195     | Rs 156     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Whatever Happened to Imperialism</i> by Prabhat Patnaik      | Rs 150     | Rs 120     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Lineages of the Present: Political Essays</i> by Aijaz Ahmad | Rs 550     | Rs 440     |



# Realpolitik, Flawed Policies and the Wretched of India's Urban Earth

Saraswati Haider

POVERTY, POLICY AND POLITICS IN MADRAS SLUMS: DYNAMICS OF SURVIVAL, GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

By Joop W. de Wit

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 305, Rs. 395.00

De Wit's book belongs to a genre of anthropological studies which is an outcome of the dilemma faced by anthropologists robbed of their conventional happy hunting ground—small, compact, considered self-sufficient, insulated primitive societies, fast disappearing in the wake of rapid industrialization, advance of communication facilities and attendant 'modernization'. While anthropologists like Robert Redfield and Milton Singer sought new space in the study of whole civilizations, many found their comfortable niche and suitability of skills—not only participant observation, but others that are now being used to present data more authentically, and from the viewpoint of the investigated—in territorially circumscribed, segregated slums—a stigmatising and derogatory naming of the living space

of the urban poor, requiring change, with a discourse on the subject already afloat and a move activated to call these by less disreputable nomenclatures like 'deprived urban areas' (DUAs), 'blighted urban areas', 'grey urban areas', etc. De Wit apparently still prefers to use the epithet *slum* for the DUA studied by him.

The developing countries are inexorably being driven towards urbanization. By the year 2000, sixty-six per cent—almost 2.2 billion—of the world's population will be living in urban areas of developing countries which countries will also contain 21 of the world's largest 30 metropolitan areas. There will be a marked shift of rural poverty to the urban milieus. In South Asia the number of urban poor households will triple from about 10 million in 1975 to 32.5 million by 2000 AD. The most vexing problem of the coming century will, therefore, in all probability, be that of DUAs—the need of their inhabitants for adequate shelter, employment and basic amenities.

In India the total urban population in 1991 was about 217 million with the rate of urbanization decelerating from 46.40 per cent in 1871–81 to 36.19 in 1980–91—at present a subject of heated debate with the Government of India (GOI) seeing in it a success of its rural employment programmes but several scholars explaining the drop being due to a saturation point reached in urban employment, or lack of growth of it; inadequate provision of housing and basic amenities. However, the concentration of the population in large urban centres continues. The number of metros (million +) increased from 12 in 1981 to 23 in 1991 and 80 cities were added to Class 1 (1 lakh +) ones in which population increased from 26 per cent to 65 with the metros containing 52 per cent of it and just four major metros (5 million +), including Madras,

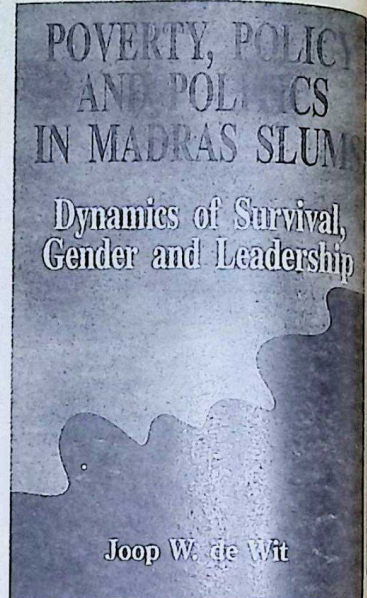
accounting for 28.64 per cent.

The GOI's revised poverty estimates stipulate the rural population living below the poverty line (PL)—still very much in the eye of a controversy—to be 37.27 per cent and the urban estimation 35.57 per cent individual scholars more realistically claiming this to be 40 per cent i.e. 87 million people.

According to the GOI estimates—erring in all probability on the lower side—the population living in the DUAs in 1981 in India was 26.33 per cent of urban population with the figure for the metros being as high as 38 per cent. The DUA population of Madras was estimated to be 35 per cent though de Wit claims it to be one third. In 1991 the population of Madras was 5.76 million and if the DUA population figure is kept constant at 35 per cent—hardly likely in the face of the influx of continued rural-to-urban migration—the DUA population of Madras works out to about 2 million—a sizeable 'vote-bank'—an integral part of Indian politics—that can make or mar any politician's career and whose magnitude and significance in electoral politics forces the government to formulate a viable DUA policy, in Delhi, being now demanded by an active judiciary.

De Wit does not seem to be sure, most probably because of the importance of all of them, as to what should be the overall objective of his study. Is it to be DUA policy—its planning, implementation and impact, politics in DUAs or the socio-cultural aspects of urban poverty and the business of living of the urban poor? However, de Wit seems to be quite sure and clear about the 6 themes that he wants to deal with, though, his is an ambitious project to be covered in a space constricting book for each of his themes has the scope and potential to form separate research studies in themselves.

De Wit's first theme is a study of intra-household relations, especially gender relations, where he describes the following briefly: how women play crucial roles in house management; often work to support their families where the husband—the head of the household—is inept though very few women are found to work because of the distrust of men of women; how women cope with the drunkenness of their worst halves, the arrack consumption and trade getting quite a significant space in de Wit's study because of its importance in the over-all Tamil Nadu politics and its pernicious effect on the DUA men. De Wit just itemizes resourceful, yet full of stress and strain, survival strategies resorted to by DUA men and women; the rather surprising vocality of women in the implementation of slum policy and the



demanding of pattas to be in their names but on the other hand their understandable disinterest in general politics confined to voting according to the wishes of their husbands. Households are categorized into four types, (a) Women-Headed Households—14 out of 89, (b) Alcohol-Addict Headed Households—27, (c) Low Male Contribution Due to Other Reasons—3 and (d) what de Wit calls Tandem Couples who unexpectedly form the majority—34 and where joint decisions and harmony prevail, an opposite situation to which I have found in Delhi in the DUA being studied by me with marked alienation, tension and discord in the man-woman bonding and all major decisions being taken by the males. De Wit takes note, again briefly, of the wide prevalence of wife-beating, discrimination of the girl child and child labour.

De Wit's second theme deals with the heterogeneity of the DUAs but he concentrates exclusively on the rich-poor divide and factional political groupings almost ignoring in toto other heterogeneous characteristics such as caste, ethnicity, region and religion which are all closely connected with DUA living and politics. Chitra Nagar—the DUA which de Wit researches first hand, is rather surprisingly, a total Dalit DUA and more astonishingly, de Wit seems to assume Dalits to be a homogeneous group, which they certainly are not.

The third theme that de Wit tackles is access problems of the urban poor because of their social handicaps of illiteracy, lack of knowledge of corrupt, speed money-demanding ways of officials and bureaucrats and the ubiquitous, confusing paper-work making the poor dependent on the better-educated,



better-off, self-aggrandizing, unscrupulous slum elites who become slum leaders. The nature and implementation of the so-called, by de Wit, slum policies, is the fourth theme which is dealt in greater detail and forms the *tour de force* of the book—DUA policy in general, and relocation policy implemented and its impact in one specific DUA. De Wit tries to demonstrate the wide gaps that exist between planning, implementation and final outcome of DUA policies and delineates quite expansively crucial interlinkages involved in the paper planning of policies and the changes that the policies undergo, and why, during implementation, due to the interference of political leaders; corruption among the officials, bureaucrats, engineers, contractors, politicians, policemen and slum leaders who form an unholy nexus indeed, and who all dupe the urban poor to make a fast buck; lack of coordination between involved agencies; lack of finances, land; no attempt at involving community participation right from the planning stage; as well as the dependency tendency of the DUA dwellers so that the denouements of the policies are far removed from what was planned, most often, worsening the situation of the urban poor rather than improving it.

Politics is the fifth theme and forms a second significant core of de Wit's book which provides a brief, succinct but informative description of Tamil Nadu politics especially of the rule of the actor M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) whose advent marked the ushering in of political machine-type politics in Tamil Nadu; the use of the cinema to promote cults; more importance given to rice and arrack politics and social welfare populist measures—the creation of a 'politics of illusion' with no efforts made to transform inequitable structures and improve and build infrastructure. Within this theme de Wit also describes how patron-client relationships—political wheeling dealing aspect of which he calls clientelism—develops between politicians and DUA dwellers with the wily slum leaders acting as vote brokers having their own clientelist and patron-client relationships with the DUA dwellers. Here, however, de Wit again disappoints by not going into how clientelism actually operates at various levels; the nature of the relationships that are forged and how a pyramidal structure of clientelism builds up from the lowest rung to the highest.

The sixth and the last theme is a sketching of the culture and traditions of the DUA dwellers which is perhaps the weakest aspect of the book and receives a too hurried and limited treatment despite its pivotal role. The

*The recorded field work of de Wit's is not comprehensive nor does it delve deep enough. There is an excessive reliance on secondary data and the theoretical aspects of the six themes—a too large package, which is perhaps at the bottom of the cramming of snippets of information on too great a variety of subjects in an attempt to say everything that needs to be said about DUA life.*

culture and traditions of Chitra Nagar is culled more from quantitative rather than qualitative data though the latter is more suited to reveal the subject's complexities and nuances and is the forte of anthropologists.

On the whole, the recorded field work of de Wit's is not comprehensive nor does it delve deep enough. There is an excessive reliance on secondary data and the theoretical aspects of the six themes—a too large package, which is perhaps at the bottom of the cramming of snippets of information on too great a variety of subjects in an attempt to say everything that needs to be said about DUA life—is again a skimming on the surface. De Wit's study is problem-oriented no doubt, and he does take into account the micro and macro level realities but is not able to use fruitfully enough all the multidimensional and significant aspects of 'the dynamic actor oriented policy analyses', 'the interface analytical framework' plus the 'deconstruction of the concept of planned intervention' developed by Norman Long which de Wit claims to have utilized—his multi-angular approach which in the absence of sufficient depth results in an excessive amount of bits of data compressed together.

De Wit's objectivity results in an account which is too clinical with the voices of the investigated actors remaining largely muted. However, de Wit's book is still significant in that it provides a whole lot of pointers to what needs to be investigated.

*Saraswati Haider is a Research Scholar at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.*

## Towards Balanced Development

Vinod K. Tiwari

INDIAN MEDIUM TOWNS: AN APPRAISAL OF THEIR ROLE AS GROWTH CENTRES

Edited by Jaymala Diddee

Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 263, Rs. 400.00

Improving economic base and infrastructure facilities in small and medium towns is considered imperative to a balanced regional development in the country. Small and medium towns play an important role in the diffusion of development to their hinterland and also act as service centres for the large number of rural settlements that do not have the services and facilities. In view of the unmanageable size of metropolitan cities in the country and high cost of providing services and infrastructure in such cities, development of small and medium towns is also considered necessary for diverting urban growth from the larger cities to the towns. However, policies promoting such towns need not be anti-metropolitan cities, but should form a part of an integrated urban development policy.

Several programmes for the development of such towns have been launched by the Government of India in the various Five Year Plans. With the objective of promoting growth of small and medium towns, a centrally-sponsored scheme of Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMT) was launched in 1979. Under this scheme, the basic infrastructure required for income-generating activities is provided in selected towns that have potential for emerging as regional centres of economic growth, and are away from metropolitan cities. However, the scheme has not been very successful in promoting growth in small and medium towns due to the ad hoc approach used in selecting the towns and limited budgetary support provided for improving their basic infrastructure.

In this context, the book *Indian Medium Towns* edited by Jaymala Diddee is a welcome addition to the literature on Indian urbanization. It contains thirteen papers presented at a National Seminar on the Role of Medium Towns

*In view of the unmanageable size of metropolitan cities in the country and high cost of providing services and infrastructure in such cities, development of small and medium towns is also considered necessary for diverting urban growth from the larger cities to the towns. However, policies promoting such towns need not be anti-metropolitan cities, but should form a part of an integrated urban development policy.*

in Spatial Diffusion of Development, held at the Department of Geography, University of Pune in October 1992. The papers presented in the book are written by geographers and planners, and therefore focus mainly on spatial patterns of the towns in different parts of the country. Secondary data from Census of India provides the main source for the various analyses presented in most of the papers. A good deal of discussion in several papers presented in the book concerns the issue of defining a medium town and working out different ranges of population size for identifying such towns which seems quite trivial. The concept of medium town is by definition relative to small, large and very large size towns, and their relative size range keeps on changing with increase in populations of existing towns and cities. The relative size range of medium



*Growth of any town or city is not a simple function of population size but an outcome of complex process based on a number of social, economic, political, locational and physical factors, and therefore, conclusions like 'cities beyond half a million population display more vigorous growth' are erroneous. Similarly, the premise that infrastructure provided in towns of particular sizes will promote growth in the towns and their region is also flawed.*

towns varies not only from one country to another but also from one state to another within a country.

The role of medium towns in the diffusion of innovations in their hinterland, and the locational advantage that they provide in service delivery to the large number of smaller settlements in the region are more important issues but these have not been examined in a systematic manner in any of the papers. As a result, conclusions questioning the rationale of promoting medium towns on the basis of an evaluation of the IDSMT scheme are drawn, as in the paper by Jaymala Didee and Simi Octania. It is a well-recognized fact that many of our development programmes and schemes are not able to achieve their stated objectives because of serious lacunae in the implementation of the programmes. Failure or limited success of a scheme does not necessarily mean that the objectives of the scheme were not desirable. The authors' logic that "even big cities never really diffuse development in space rather they grow at the expense of the region" is based more on theoretical conjecture than on any methodical study of the linkages of the cities with its region.

Growth of any town or city is not a simple function of population size but an outcome of complex process based on a number of social, economic, political, locational and physical factors, and therefore, conclusions like 'cities beyond half a million population display more vigorous growth' are erroneous. Similarly, the premise that infrastructure provided in towns of particular sizes will promote growth in the towns and their region is also flawed. More detailed analyses need to be carried out to make decisions about provision of new infrastructure and services at locations that may facilitate development in the town and its region. Such analyses require use of various information systems, and planning and decision support systems supplemented by qualitative inputs from the various stakeholders, in view of the semi-structured nature of the planning process. However, the papers included in the book do not provide insights into

any such support systems.

On the other hand, in some of the papers various quantitative techniques have been used to draw conclusions which are not strictly based on the analysis results. Shekhar Mukherji's paper in which a number of multivariate statistical analyses have been used for functional classification of urban centres in the country, is a perfect example of what Christopher Benninger calls 'technical gymnastics' in his paper. Here, complex statistical techniques, commonly used in regional analysis in the 1960s when quantification in social sciences began, are applied to weak data sets for functional classification of towns. It is difficult to accept the rationale of using factor analysis for functional analysis when in the first step he uses a simple indicator (proportion of agriculture workers) for classification of urban centres into 'agriculture' and 'non-agriculture' towns and then he subjects these two sets of towns to all kinds of multivariate analysis for further classification of towns within the two sets. The whole exercise seems futile particularly if one examines the way he has interpreted the factor loading etc. to identify the functional dimensions.

Walter Christaller's theory and its postulates do provide an excellent theoretical basis for structuring the planning and decision-making models for developing an efficient spatial organisation of settlements, but his hierarchical principles that were developed by assuming a highly simplified spatial context have no relevance in the present day actual planning situations. Substantial discussion in the paper by Nina Singh and Gopal Krishan is devoted to the use of Christaller's market principle of settlement hierarchy for proving the obvious point that population size of medium town is time and area specific.

Christopher Benninger's small paper included in the book raises some important issues involved in the development of small and medium towns, and therefore, it is a good paper for initiating discussion on the role of the towns and the steps that need to be taken to strengthen this role in pro-

moting regional development. However, the paper does not provide any in-depth analysis of the issues and possible solutions. Aneeta Benninger in her paper highlights the urban problems caused due to increasing population in large cities, environmental degradation, social inequalities, informal sector etc. She does not find any merit in promoting small and medium towns and concludes that a spatial intervention by investing in the lower order settlement has not had a positive impact on diffusion of development. Some of the conclusions like 'industrial estates have failed and facilities such as health and education have been under-utilised,' presented in the paper, are made without any analysis or citations.

V.S. Phadke, while rightly pointing out that size alone is a poor indicator of the importance of a town, emphasises that only those medium towns that have certain minimum infrastructure, institutional and economic base can provide intervening opportunities to stem direct migration to cities. The paper by Swapana Banerjee-Guha presents an interesting case study of Siliguri town that was selected as a growth centre in the early 1970s and examines the impact of various measures taken to develop the town as reflected in its population growth and occupational structure. She points out some basic flaws in the medium town development approach and draws attention to the inadequacy of support and planning interventions provided for the development.

Daksha Barai's and Vijayalakshmi's paper on the study of nine towns in the

hinterland of Bangalore City analyses the various types of linkages of the towns with the city to develop a planning strategy for the development of medium towns. However, the suggested strategy has no innovative ideas except the ones like developing satellite towns, in spite of the fact that no development took place in the two satellite towns, Kengeri and Yelhanka, in the city region of Bangalore until the towns got subsumed in the city spread. Vasantha Kumaran's paper outlines some of the problems of urban development in the country and suggests some short term and some long term policy options that are very general in nature.

Though the papers presented in the book do not contain much in-depth analyses of the role and impact of medium towns in the regional development process, they do underline the importance of promoting the towns and highlight the lacunae in the policies and programmes initiated by the government in this regard. The book will therefore, be found useful by those interested in the problems of urban and regional development.

Vinod K. Tewari, Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, is former Professor of Human Settlements Management, and Dean, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, Visiting Professor, Human Settlements Development Program, Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, Thailand, and Department of Geography, University of Iowa, Iowa City, USA.

O my dear dad  
Don't get me married to an old man  
O my dear father  
Don't get an old man for me  
If you get me married to him  
I will soon be a widow  
My dear dad  
Don't give me to a servant  
He will be obedient to his master  
And I will have to get up early  
Don't send me away my father  
Don't give me to an old man  
Well, if you find a suitor for me  
You may find a shepherd  
But again to say  
The shepherd should be tough and healthy  
He should not be an ill man  
Please do not get me married to an old man  
Otherwise I will be a widow soon.  
I would prefer a Pahal (a sheep reare-)  
As he can provide me  
Enough meat to eat  
Enough wool for a chola.

(A Gaddi song) From Languages of Indigenous Peoples of India: The Ethnic Space



## If You Ask Me...

## A Memorable Utterance

N.S. Jagannathan

Once in a while, you come across a speech of a public person that stands out in the midst of an ocean of banality of public discourse as an authentic utterance that will live for ever. At a venture, I could name Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, as one such, Mahatma Gandhi's defence of himself before Judge Bloomfield in the sedition trial in 1922 (and the judge's own memorable order sentencing Gandhi), and Nehru's "Tryst with Destiny" speech are other such. In what follows, I am going to summarize because it is too long to reproduce in full a recent speech by one of the remarkable men of our times. I am withholding for the nonce the name, the occasion and the specific references in it for reasons which will be soon be apparent. Here goes:

"With a degree of simplification it can be said that the life of our society—just as the life of any society under any circumstances—has two faces, one of which, in one way or another, is visible through the other.

"The first face consists of the things people do: they go to work, with varying degrees of success, they engage in business, they marry or divorce, they have children or remain childless. . . . They read books or watch television and if they are younger than most of us, they go dancing in discotheques. All things considered, I think our everyday life is incomparably better and richer (than before)."

"The life of our society, however, has another face, which we might describe as the relationship of citizens to their state, to the social system, to the climate of public life, to politics. . . . At present, this face is, in fact, quite glum. Most people—and public opinion polls confirm this—are upset, disappointed, or even disgusted with social conditions in our country. Many people believe—democracy or not—there are people in power who cannot be trusted, who are concerned more with their own advantage than they are with the general interest. Many are convinced that dishonest business people operate at a disadvantage, while dishonest profiteers get the green light. The belief prevails that in this country it pays to lie and steal, that many politicians and civil servants are on the take, and that

political parties—though they all, without exception, declare their intentions honourable—are secretly manipulated by shady financial cabals.

"After eight years of trying to build a market economy, many people wonder why our economy is still doing so poorly. . . . They wonder why we are choking in smog when so much is apparently being spent on the environment, why prices, including rents and utilities, are rising faster. . . . They wonder why we should be afraid to walk at night in the centre of our cities and towns, why almost nothing but banks, hotels and mansions for the rich are being built, and so on. In short, more and more people are disgusted with policies they understandably and rightly hold as responsible for all these unfortunate things. And although they freely elected us, they regard us with suspicion, if not outright repugnance. . . .

"I shall mention only two causes, or more precisely, two sets of causes. The first set I would describe as historical. . . . The 'time of certainties'—certainties that were, to be sure, small-minded, banal and suicidal for society, but certainties none the less—gave way to a time of freedom. To many, given their previous experience, this freedom must have seemed boundless and therefore utterly seductive. With it, completely new demands were placed on individual responsibility, and many found this responsibility unbearable. I sometimes compare this odd state to the psychosis that follows imprisonment, when a prisoner, used to living for years in a narrow corridor of carefully devised rules, suddenly finds himself in the strange landscape of freedom, where he must feel that everything is permitted, and at the same time is overwhelmed by the immense need to make decisions each day and take responsibility for them.

"Of course, it would be unfair to blame everything—in a way familiar to Marxists—on blind historical inevitability. A role no less important, in some senses even more important, is played by a second set of causes. I refer to what we ourselves have wrought. When I say, 'we', I mean all of us who have served as elected representatives. . . .

"It seems to me that our main fault was vanity. . . . We were genuinely further ahead in some things than other countries—or so it seemed at first. . . . Very likely this went to our heads. We behaved like arrogant students at the

top of their class or spoiled only children who feel superior to others and think they have the right to tell others what to do. . . .

"We were hypnotised by our own macroeconomic indicators, heedless of the fact that sooner or later, these indicators would also reveal what lay beyond the horizon of the macroeconomic or technocratic world view: that there are factors whose weight or significance no accountant can calculate, but which nevertheless create the only thinkable environment for any economic development—I mean the rules of the game, the rule of law, the moral order from which every system of governance derives, and without which it cannot function, a climate of social concord.

"The declared ideal of success and profit was defiled because we permitted a state of affairs in which the most immoral became the most successful and the greatest profits were made by thieves who stole with impunity. Under the cloak of liberalism, which regarded any kind of economic controls or regulations as left-wing aberrations, the Marxist doctrine of the structure and the superstructure lived on, though paradoxically it was hidden from view. Morality, decency, humility before the order of nature, solidarity, concern for the future generations, respect for the law, the culture of interpersonal relationships—all these and many similar things were trivialised as "superstructure", as icings on the cake, until at last we realised that there was nothing left to put the icing on: the forces of economic production themselves had been undermined.

"Man is a social being. He needs to associate with others in a variety of ways. He needs to participate in public affairs, be it only in his small world. He needs to work for the general good. That, too, was somehow forgotten. The phrase, "the citizen and the state" was bandied about, but it had the effect of isolating the citizen rather than engaging him.

"And the state as such? It should be small but strong, they say. Yet I am afraid the exact opposite is true: it is large and weak. . . .

"I have come before you today not out of an obsessive need to lament, not to pick masochistically at my wounds, nor even to flaunt the wisdom of hindsight, which in the end would only lend credence to the utterly false notion that we have lost everything and achieved nothing. I have come before you for another reason: to meditate briefly on what lies ahead and what we must do to transform the gloomy countenance of our common life to one with a sunnier disposition.

"The first and most important point I wish to make is that the government,

regardless of who forms it—and indeed, everyone active in public life—should say clearly to our fellow citizens that real human community and real prosperity are thinkable only if clear, good, and widely understandable and respected rules govern the various areas of life. Respect for these rules may of course be reinforced by the swift and strict punishment of their violation. But that is, and will always be, only a secondary measure. The most important thing is that this respect take root in people's mind so deeply that it becomes a matter of honour to observe the laws, not to flout and circumvent them.

"To put it another way: without a broad cultivation of the moral order, which alone can be the source of respect for the rules of human community, and thus as well as the mortar of our civic society, we will have no chance of achieving social peace, stability, contentment and prosperity. I am convinced that all of us who influence what goes on in this country must accept this principle as our own and attempt each day to imbue our political work with it. The citizens and the media must monitor this carefully, to see if we are really doing that job, and should they determine we are not, they must use every means the democratic system affords, to replace us with better people.

"Secondly, the entire system of technical rules that govern our life together, that is, our legal order, must be infused with the spirit of justice and decency. At present, because of unprecedented changes within it, our legal system is extremely tangled and complex. . . . I am deeply convinced that the clearer, more transparent, and comprehensible our legal system is to citizens, the greater our hope that it will be respected. . . .

"Thirdly, the network of local government and the civil service is the nervous system of the state. I consider it a great and fundamental task of the period ahead of us to begin reforming this system with all necessary speed. . . .

"So what, in fact, is the state of our economy? . . . I don't share the opinion held by some that the entire transformation process was misconceived, badly thought out, and poorly directed. I would say that our problem is precisely the opposite. The transformation stopped halfway, which may well be the worst thing that could have happened to it. Yes, all manner of enterprises have been formally privatised, but which of them have clear and specific owners who are fully committed to enhancing their productivity and their long-range prospects?

"The role our banks play in this seems very strange to me. They indirectly own companies that lose money, and the more those companies lose, the more the banks lend them. A small businessman is unable to borrow half a

\* Here and in what follows, words within brackets are my summaries of longer passages. Series of dots signify omissions.



million in a sensible and specific investment, while some shady pseudo-entrepreneur can easily borrow half a billion without anyone taking a hard look at what he actually needs it for. . . Do we really have to pay for the rapidity of our privatisation process—a rapidity that was welcome and proper—with stolen billions, even tens of billions?

"...Do we have a clear conception of which enterprises are of such strategic or vital importance that the state must maintain its share of the ownership of enterprise, and which can be privatised without further ado? and if such a conception does exist, why are companies already earmarked for privatisation not being privatised?

"In other words, it is high time our economic transformation got its second wind. It is high time for politicians to draw up an inventory of what remains to be done, and to tell citizens, without delay, how they intend to complete the processes. The more clearly this is explained, the more easily citizens will come to terms with temporary sacrifices. . .

"No reasonable person could accuse the current government of ignoring the environment. On the contrary, the many billions spent on various environmental projects are beginning to bear fruit in the form of mild improvements in the state of the air, the soil and the water. Even so, I am still not persuaded that there is a clear conception behind such investments. Take, for example, the simple principle that cleaning up the environment already polluted by industry is not enough; nonpolluting industries have to be established as well. . .

"I have left culture to the end not because I consider it to be some superstructural 'icing of the cake,' but precisely for the opposite reason... I am not thinking of culture as a separate sphere of human activity, such as caring for the heritage sites, producing films or writing poetry. I mean culture in the broadest sense—that is, the culture of human relationships, of human existence, of human work, of human enterprise, of public and political life. . .

"Culture cannot be measured by the number of splendid rock stars who visit our country, or by the beauty of fashions created by world-class designers and modelled for us by world famous models, but by something else. It can be measured, for example, by what skinheads shout in the bars, by how many have been lynched or murdered, by how terribly some of us behave to our fellow human beings simply because they have a different colour of skin.

"This is not the first time I have spoken to you about the nonprofit sector, the reform of the civil service, and other such matters. But if I do it now, you

must know I am talking about what is called a civil society. That means a society that makes room for the richest possible self-structuring and the richest possible participation in public life. In this sense, civil society is important for two reasons: in the first place, it enables people to be themselves in all their dimensions, which includes being social creatures who desire, in thousands of ways, to participate in the life of the community in which they live. In the second place, it functions as a genuine guarantee of political stability. The more developed all the organs, institutions and instruments of civil society are, the more resistant that society will be to political upheavals or reversals. . .

So there. Surely, the speaker is, or could easily have been, an Indian? Every point made is so pat to our situation: the nature of our current discontents, the cancerously corrupt ruling class and the people's cynical acceptance of it as given, (as shown by the recent elections in which many "leaders" and parties with charges of malfeasance have been returned to Parliament), the steady erosion of vital institutions of a civic society and even the specifics of our political and economic situation seem absolutely apropos. Equally relevant is the moral of the urgency of renewing the tattered civic society by a stern sense of public purpose imbued with moral passion.

No, the speech is not by an Indian, though, as I said, it could well have been. That is why I have taken the trouble of reproducing from it extensively. It is actually the State of the Union address to the Czech Parliament delivered last December by President Vaclav Havel. (In November, the Czech Government headed by Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus had to resign following allegations that his party had drawn on a slush fund stashed away—where else?—in a Swiss bank. An interim government then came into being.)

There is a great deal more in the speech, which are context and country specific, which, as I indicated at the beginning, I have omitted, retaining only the "universal" points that Havel made. On second thoughts, the speech is too long to belong to the great (and pithy) utterances I had compared it to. It is more in the genre of Burkean eloquence, of memorable enunciations of first principles and the fundamentals of a civic society. As such, the speech is a great document of our times.

I am indebted for the above extracts to the English translation of the speech by Paul Wilson that appeared in the March 5 issue of the *New York Review of Books*.

*N.S. Jagannathan is a former editor of Indian Express and Indian Review of Books, Madras.*

## Letter from London

Stephen Moss

**T**he past couple of months have been remarkable ones for the publishing business in the UK, with two sensational stories which have taken books out of the culture sections of newspapers and on to the front pages. Both concerned what might be called the politics of publishing and posed serious questions about the way the industry conducted itself.

The first was the Chris Patten affair, in which HarperCollins cancelled its contract to publish the former governor of Hong Kong's thoughts on the future of democracy in Asia because Rupert Murdoch, who owns HarperCollins, was anxious not to upset the Chinese authorities. Mr Murdoch's publishing interests, it would seem, come a distant second to his Asian satellite interests.

Stuart Proffitt, Mr Patten's editor and a senior figure at HarperCollins, resigned in protest, both at the decision and at the company's initial (and hastily retracted) claim that the book had been rejected because it wasn't good enough. Lawyers were consulted on all sides, the HarperCollins management looked absurd, and several authors withdrew their books from the company out of sympathy with Mr. Patten.

Then, just as the publishing business was getting over this shock to the system and with the luminaries of the industry gathered for the annual London Book Fair, came an even bigger sensation: the announcement in the United States that the German publishing conglomerate Bertelsmann was to buy the mighty Random House for the little matter of \$1.4 billion and merge it with Bantam Doubleday Dell to create a company with 10 per cent of the US book market.

This merger has worldwide implications but what it means in the UK is the creation of one huge publishing company with a particularly intimidating presence in fiction. Random House's literary imprints are the strongest in the UK; Transworld is dominant in middle-market fiction; the two together will be a powerful unit.

The history of publishing in Britain over the past 30 years has been one of ever-increasing concentration. The imprints founded and run by "gentleman" publishers such as Hamish Hamilton, Victor Gollancz and Frederick Warburg were each absorbed into conglomerates. Now, in a development which Karl Marx would no doubt recognise,

these larger groups are themselves the targets for companies that operate at a global level and across all media.

Old-stagers, understandably, become misty-eyed at such developments. They hanker after the days when publishing was run by a close-knit group of like-minded individuals—writers, publishers, academics, booksellers—fascinated by books, ideas, cultural exchange. It would be wrong to suggest that this has disappeared completely but in a world now governed by conglomerate power there are clear dangers that the bond between authors and publishers will be weakened. There is also a risk that publishers may be less keen to nurture new talent in favour of the bankable.

Tycoon power certainly underpins the Random House-Transworld deal. It was brokered in the US by Bertelsmann's chief executive-elect Thomas Middlehoff, and S.I. Newhouse, chairman of Advance Publications, who met at a party last November for the latter's 70th birthday. The UK industry had had no indication that a deal was imminent, and even the Random House UK Board was not informed until 9.30 a.m. on the day news of the acquisition was announced to the press.

Nor will this be the last mega-merger. News International is hoping to sell HarperCollins and one possible buyer is the cash-rich Pearson Group, which owns Penguin. In the paranoid world of media tycoonery, the mighty Viking Penguin may now feel it has to get even mightier in the face of Transworld Random House. And so it goes.

Faced with these examples of political pressure and corporate power, some pundits throw up their hands in despair and say the great days of independent publishing are over. But such an argument is premature. There is a counter-view that as this apparently inexorable concentration of capital proceeds, space opens up for smaller publishers; that, in effect, a new breed of independents is growing up who are faster on their feet than the conglomerates and can offer new authors more support.

Fourth Estate, Bloomsbury and Granta are cases in point—good, eager publishers with fine lists and a commitment to high-quality fiction. And Faber, one of the older guard of independent publishers, has been enjoying a remarkable year, largely thanks to the poet laureate Ted Hughes's best-selling *Birthday Letters* and *Tales From Oxford*. By acquiring Random House Bertelsmann has created a mighty empire, but we all know what happens to empires.

*Stephen Moss is literary editor of The Guardian.*



# A Wise Policy is a Well-Informed Policy

Ashok R. Kelkar

LANGUAGES OF TRIBAL AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF INDIA: THE ETHNIC SPACE

Edited by Anvita Abbi

Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1997, pp. xiv+494, hb, Rs. 595.00

The long-winded book title testifies not merely to the editor's (and possibly the publisher's) desire to make it intelligible (will 'adivasi' not be opaque outside India?), acceptable ('aboriginal' like 'Asiatic' carries the White man's burden or 'primitive' carries the civilized man's arrogance) and attractive ('ethnic' and 'space' are fashionable), but also to the Indian reader's incuriosity, ignorance, and uncertainty about this neglected partner in Indian civilization and even more so about their languages. Sanskrit doesn't even have a name for people who are not either *sa-varna* or *ati-sūdra* or *mleccha* as a comprehensive term for *kirātas*, *sabaras*, or the like. The available philological, archaeological, and linguistic evidence for the settlement history of South Asia is still incomplete and inconclusive. So who is indigenous and who is not? (So there are those who even eye the term *adivasi* as politically incorrect or even as part of the White man's conspiracy to make a fictitious division between the ascendant Aryans and the recumbent non-Aryans.) Again, a person's linguistic ancestors may not be identical with his biological ancestors. Gadaba tribesmen variously speak Gadaba (Dravidian), Gutob (Munna Austro-Asiatic), or Bhatari (Indo-Aryan). Very few Nahali tribesmen now speak Nahali (Nahali Austro-Asiatic), most of them speak either Korku (Munda Austro-Asiatic) or Nimari (Indo-Aryan). Finally, not all the languages under review will care to be identified as 'tribal': Bangani or Meitei speakers (ch. 10, 25) for instance are not exactly tribesmen.

Be that as it may, the editor can take a justifiable pride in fulfilling the need for discussing these languages as a group, whatever their linguistic affiliation, between the covers of a single book from linguistic as well as perilinguistic points of view; even more so when one considers that there is no

political or administrative will to support such an enterprise. The *adivasis* are no longer 'peace-loving, self-contented' (p. 1); everywhere they are expressing their economic or cultural distress with various degrees of intensity. How long is the apathy or callousness of the 'civilized' going to continue?

The contributors (the list at the end omits Norman Zide and Claus Peter Zoller by oversight) are mostly Indian (with a sprinkling of Americans and Europeans) and mostly linguists (with a sprinkling of ethnographers). The twenty-five studies are grouped under seven parts: over-all perilinguistic studies (5), case studies in linguistic contact and convergence (3), and language-specific studies in word and sentence grammar, writing system (but not sound systems), vocabulary and poetic style, internal and external history of languages, which are grouped under four families (Indo-Aryan 1, Dravidian 3, Austro-Asiatic 7, Tibeto-Burman 5) and a language isolate (Andamanese 1). (The other language isolate, Burushaski spoken in Pak-occupied Kashmir, never gets a mention.) In addition, there are the editorial preface and introductory chapter (in part I), Index, adequate illustrative material like maps and facsimiles, and most fetchingly, tribal language poems in English translation as epigraphs to the seven parts. The production is fairly good: one hopes that the misprints do not disfigure the language citations and wishes that the copy-editing had been more thorough. Thus, while the editor duly warns that 'language change' in ch. 18 does not mean change within a language but a speaker's shift from one language to another, she fails (p. 160) to correct Rāma's brother Bhārata to Bharata or to point out that *roiño* is not an echo of *rāt* 'night' but a descendant of *rajanī*. Given that the volume is as much addressed to the few studious administrators, educationists, and

politicians still left as to socially alert linguists and linguistically alert sociologists and ethnologists, the contributors should have been alerted to refrain from cryptic allusions to technicalities and excessively abstruse formalism.

Some of the studies that make rewarding reading include: D.N.S. Bhat's lucid and penetrating study of noun-verb distinction in Munda languages; L.M. Khubchandani's reading of census returns as the citizens' political statement rather than as mere facts; M.S. Andronov's clearing up of two long-standing puzzles in Brahui (Dravidian language in Baluchistan) and Gondi historical phonology; Imtiaz Hasnain's balanced *mise-au-point* on language planning. Indeed none of them is wholly unrewarding.

Some very pertinent and interesting observations keep recurring: (1) The Government of India is nervously sitting tight on language data in the Censuses of 1971, 1981, 1991 so that scholars and policy-makers have to fall back on out-of-date 1961 figures. (2) The maintenance of language distinctness goes with the motive of ethnic pride or isolation from unlike languages. The shift or adaptation to locally or regionally dominant languages (as with Nahali to Korku or Bhatari) goes with the motive of economic or cultural assimilation. Likewise, with writing systems. Modernization in polity and technology can facilitate either of the two. The emergence of contact languages like Nagamese or Sadri can serve either motive. (3) The *adivasis* may have primitive technology, but speak no primitive languages (in the sense in which a child's earliest linguistic efforts may be primitive). Rather, the 'strangeness' of their languages may be traceable to their ways of thought and life. (4) The cognitive strategy of a people may get reflected in word formation (sound symbolism, Badaga verb forms distinct for the factual, the opened, and the virtual) and vocabulary (low degree of division of labour going with low incidence of vocabulary specialization). (5) The life-coping strategy of a people may get reflected in sentence formation (predicate as a capsule sentence making reference claims or compliance claims, the other constituents being merely optional elucidations), phrase formation (noun encapsulating the relatum, noun tagged with a systematic classifier for animacy, shape, or the like), honorific and speaker-inclusive reference, and poetic text formation (in the depersonalized, mystificatory, and incantatory mode).

Some pertinent observations, contrary to expectation, fail to turn up: (1) Some features that are salient in *adivasi* languages also appear in non-*adivasi*

Languages of  
Tribal and Indigenous Peoples  
of India

THE ETHNIC SPACE



Edited by  
Anvita Abbi

languages: subject, object, and occasionally even indirect object encapsulation in the verb in Sindhi, Marathi (even Sanskrit to judge from Panini 2:3:1); profuse and systematic sound symbolism in Nepali, Marathi; honorific and speaker-inclusive reference; and so on. (2) Certain states in India (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, for example) have experimented with bilingual medium of class room teaching and text books in the earliest years of primary education for preventing drop-outs. (I was associated with two such efforts.) The editor has invited no contribution on these efforts.

The message of this volume, though couched in sober, scientific terms is loud and clear: far from the *adivasis* being a 'problem' for the non-*adivasis*, the non-*adivasis* in all their complacency, apathy, pompous confidence, and rapaciousness are a problem for the *adivasis*. Language is the best entry point to the problem. The stumbling block is mindless adhocism strong on legislation but weak on positive action. Mindless emotionalism is only a reaction, especially when there is no move to take the affected people into confidence. It is time that the sober or not so hardened policy-makers, who will do well to read this volume, should din the message into the heads of the not-so-sober policy-makers if they can. The scholars have done their part of the job.

Ashok R. Kelkar retired as Professor of Linguistics from Deccan College and University of Pune and has published extensively in English, Marathi, and Hindi on language, literature, and the sign process together with their philosophical analysis.



# The Case of the Missing Mussulman

Harish Trivedi

DAASTAN-E-LAAPATA (THE TALE OF THE MISSING PERSON)

A Novel in Hindi by Manzoor Ehtesham

Rajkamal Prakashan, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 245, Rs. 150.00

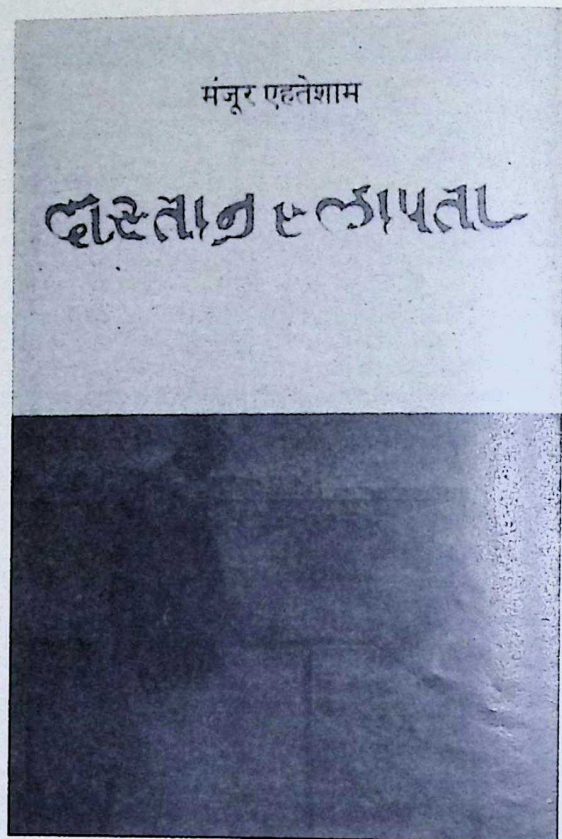
Why have there been so few Muslim characters in Hindi fiction—at least since Premchand? The question keeps coming up in Hindi critical debates from time to time, and there can, of course, be no politically acceptable answer to it. A strictly literary answer, however, may be that novelists always write not about the whole of society but about only the fraction of it which they know best. To adduce a counter-example, in Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, a novel about the supplanting of the cultured old Mughal Delhi by the brash British New Delhi, of about seventy characters, only one is a Hindu and he occupies but half a page in which he is caricatured for speaking funny Hindi. And this when Ali's novel is set in a historical time and place, Chandni Chowk in the 1910s, where Hindus actually outnumbered Muslims! Apparently, then, for writers in terms of community as for Emily Dickinson in a more individual sense, "The Soul selects its own company—Then shuts the door."

But another larger reason why there are so few Muslim characters in Hindi may arguably be that there have been until recently very few Muslim novelists in Hindi to write about them. Until the last quarter of the 18th century, some of the foremost Hindi writers had been Muslim: Jayasi, Rahim, Rasakhan

and Alam, and what is more, they had written broadly in the same bhakti idiom which the Hindu poets had adopted. But at about that time, there occurred a major split. Urdu arose as a medium for literary expression and most Muslim (as well as some Hindu) writers preferred to write in it, until the politicisation of Urdu and its adoption as a major plank for the separatist demand for Partition led to its elevation (and migration?) as the national language of Pakistan. Since 1947, however, Hindi has seen a return of Muslim writers in large numbers and we now have, correspondingly, a welcome wider representation of Muslim life in Hindi.

Manzoor Ehtesham is one such post-Partition writer and his third novel, *Daastan-e-LAAPATA*, (The Tale of the Missing Person) brings to us an intimate and complex account of what it means to be a Muslim in post-colonial India. This novel picks up more or less where his last novel, *Sookha Bargad* (1986: The Withered Banyan), already acclaimed in Hindi as a minor classic, had left off. But this new novel also marks a significant shift in narratorial mode and manner. While *Sookha Bargad* was a social realist novel tracing the growth to 'secular' self-realization of two adolescent Muslim siblings in Bhopal, the hero of *Daastan* is a Muslim man in his middle age, muddling along in a city

*This novel picks up more or less where his last novel, Sookha Bargad (1986: The Withered Banyan), already acclaimed in Hindi as a minor classic, had left off. But this new novel also marks a significant shift in narratorial mode and manner. While Sookha Bargad was a social realist novel tracing the growth to 'secular' self-realization of two adolescent Muslim siblings in Bhopal, the hero of Daastan is a Muslim man in his middle age, muddling along in a city (still Bhopal) grown less congenial and a nation grown more bewildering.*



(still Bhopal) grown less congenial and a nation grown more bewildering. Our hero has now no hope of ever knowing who he is; he is so lost, indeed, that he has gone missing.

This man, named Zamir Ehamad (not Ahmad) Khan, suffers from an unspecified and undiagnosable disease, connects only fitfully with other characters in the novel (who are all Muslims bar one) and leads an altogether disjointed and ineffectual life. This is probably because this is partly a modernist novel, in which one may anguish over who one is without specific causes for being so anguished, and partly a post-modernist novel, in which all is contingent and fragmentary anyhow and, above everything else, a 'construction'—as the narrator intervenes in the two Prefaces planted in the middle of the novel to remind us!

Much of the power of *Sookha Bargad* lay in its being what is reductively called a social document, in its confronting reality head-on, and in its treating the Muslim-Hindu question with a candour so bold as to cause a frisson. *Daastan*, on the other hand, in its quizzical, playful and self-reflexive way, is first of all about the barely bearable lightness of being, and only then about being a Muslim. Questions of the alternative presence of Pakistan, Kashmir, Muslim personal law etc. are all raised but almost in passing, just as the Union Carbide Zamir and his one Hindu friend (with allegorical synonymity named

Vivek) thus seems stuck on, a vestige from some older more schematic conceptualization. Even more implausible is the abrupt narratorial jump to December 1992 and the Babri Masjid in the last couple of pages; it lacks altogether the force and cogency of the reference to Bhutto's hanging in the last page of *Sookha Bargad*.

Though Manzoor Ehtesham may not think so himself, the best parts of *Daastan* are still the intimate scenes of Muslim family life which he evokes with a fine flair for nostalgia. As the young Zamir lies at night with his mother under an open sky, she teaches him how to trace a constellation which would spell in Arabic script the name "Mohammad". Dulhan Chachi goes for Haj all the way to Kaaba but refuses to kiss the sacred stone out of disgust at finding that it is already dripping with the saliva of the numerous faithful who have kissed it before. Asked to describe the Taj Mahal (which he has stopped to see on his way to study in Aligarh) Zamir says it looks so fresh and sparkling new as to suggest that perhaps the fortieth-day obsequies for Mumtaz Mahal were yet to take place.

There is an elegance and urbanity and wit in Manzoor Ehtesham which immediately marks him out from most contemporary Hindi writers (whose strengths often lie elsewhere). His narratorial manner is relaxed and confident and stylish, though it must be admitted that there is hardly any more



of the *daastan* mode in this novel than there is of the name in *The Trotter-nama*. On the whole, however, this book reads like a novel still vaguely and amiably in search of itself. It is not centred in a character or even in human relationships, it does not address any specific theme (unless Muslim life in north India is a theme by itself), it is at times naively self-indulgent, and of the three equal parts into which it is divided, the last one is so slack and inconsequential as to seem dispensable. Perhaps this novel was too long in the making; perhaps there arose a writer's block at the end of Part II, as there did famously in the case of *A Passage to India*, which incidentally makes an interesting intertextual appearance here.

Finally, such have been the conditions of Muslim-Hindu coexistence in north India in our times that the language in which one writes about them becomes itself part of one's subject-matter. The Hindi that Ehtesham writes is on the whole so fluent and idiomatic, and so subtly and variously flavoured, as to be a source of constant relish, reminding one at times of an accomplished stylist such as Amrit Rai. But it also has its little cruxes and problems. As might perhaps be expected, Ehtesham uses some Urdu words which may not prove immediately accessible to many Hindi readers: *khalaqat*, *shadeed*, *fazir*, *kushadagi*, *aitiraf* and *subukdosh*. But it is when he indulges in the bilingual trick of using an Urdu word first and immediately after providing its Hindi synonym ("*maharat aur siddhahastata*"),

or when he uses Urdu and Hindi words together in new and strange collocations ("*vajib kaaran*", "*pukhta aashta*") that one gets the odd sensation which Premchand described as that of sighting an odd crow in a row of swans. However, it is in his occasional determination to show that he knows heavily Sanskritized Hindi as well as the next fellow that Manzoor Ehtesham betrays himself as basically an Urdu writer writing in Hindi (—as indeed did Gulsher Khan Shani earlier and Rahi Masoom Raza not in *Adha Gaon* but in the dialogues for the T.V. *Mahabharat*). For example, Ehtesham writes of "*nirbaadhyata*" and "*samagra aur sampoorna paripakvata*," thus gratuitously endorsing the artificial, government-sponsored, dictionary variety of the language which has served to give Hindi a bad name and to hang it. And all this in a novel! As poetic retribution, perhaps, his publishers have misprinted Ehtesham's own name on the dust-jacket, the title-page and even the copyright-by-line (but not as it happens on the back flap), as not Manzoor but *Manjoor*, as a small price he must presumably pay for writing in Hindi-without-the bindi. *Kyon bhai Manzoor, manjoor hai?*

Harish Trivedi, Professor and Head of Department of English at Delhi University is the author of *Colonial Transactions: English Literature* (new ed. 1995) and co-editor of *Interrogating Post-colonialism* (1996).

## The Press and Telugu Literature

Turai Muralidhar

The printing press was an important part of the missionary equipment in the nineteenth century India. Realizing at once that to instill love of Christ in the heart of the people they must approach them through the medium of their mother-tongues the missionaries set about learning them and within no time of their arrival they had produced books in the vernaculars. The Telugu printing machine had arrived in Madras by 1818. The missionaries had no extensive or intimate knowledge of genius of the Telugu language. The result was their writings were artificial and sometimes even amusing for their malapropisms. But the printed books and newspapers, for both of which the missionaries were mostly responsible, brought literature within the reach of the average man and helped in its advancement. The first Telugu paper *Vrithanthini* appeared from the city of Madras during 1838–1841. *Varthamana Tarangini* edited by Purvada Venkata Rao too had a short run. *Hitareda* was started in 1848 at Machilipatnam. Like most early newspapers it was not merely a purveyor of news; it was also interested in literature.

The first Telugu paper to have accorded primacy to literature was *Sujanaranjani* (1865), *Bahujanapalli* *Sitarama Charyulu* and *Karumanchi* *Subbarayulu* *Nayudu* seemed to have kept their objectives clearly in mind while editing it. The paper was a friend to the University students giving Telugu equivalents to important English words. Narrow and illiberal in its outlook and a stalwart champion of the past *Andhre Basha Sanjeevani* was throughout its career the rallying point of every conservative prejudice and was opposed among other things to religious reforms and female education. The first Telugu elegy which appeared in its pages was commended by English journals such as *Journal of Education*, *Native Public Opinion* and *Journal of Hindu Sreyobhi Vardhani Sabha*. *Purushardha Pradayini* \* (1872) ran uninterrupted for twenty years under the able editorships of *Umaranganayakulu*. All important literary genres were fos-

tered in its pages which had an English section.

*Vivekavardhani* (1874–1893) edited by Kandukuri Veeresalingam projects before us the portrait of an age. Kandukuri Veeresalingam had progressive ideas and his articles on matters social, religious and political with their infusion of rationalism caused a stir in the Telugu country. Children's literature in Telugu was published for the first time in *Jana Vinodhini* (1875–1885). Established in 1885, *Amudrita Granta Chintamani* was devoted exclusively to the study and dissemination of Telugu literature. It had influenced trends in Telugu literature for about two decades. Efforts to delimit and categorize the term "novel" with reference to Telugu literature were made by *Chintamani* (1890–1994). The efforts bore fruit and the paper successfully conducted a novel competition for authors. The first women's magazine *Balika* was edited by *Sangitarao Bapiraju*. *Sasirekha* (1893–1900) used to project before its readers the portraits of men with striking gifts and lovable personalities.

The steady increase in the number of newspapers and journals in the twentieth century is symptomatic of increasing literary, social and political awareness among the Telugu speaking populace. *Hindu Sundari* (1902) had a distinct social and political creed. Its contributors, all women, had a stronghold on their readers in those days of divided aims and shifting values. It did the work of a university in enlarging the horizons of interest and forming and cultivating the taste of whole generation of readers. The career of literary magazines such as *Manorama* (1906–1910) and *Deshamatha* (1910–1913) had been steady but undistinguished. *Andhra Bharathi* (1910–1915), the leading literary journal published *'Diddubatu'* the first Telugu short story. Research in Telugu studies was the forte of *Andhra Sahitya Parishatpatrika* (1912). Telugu was founded by *Gidugu Ramamurthy* on February 28, 1919. *Gidugu* was the champion of the use of spoken idiom in literary Telugu and his journal gives an idea of the stupendous struggle of his time between the

Whatever this character "Zameer Ehmud Khan" is I am not. . . I believe that each person in this world is condemned to live with a character of his own imagination who may be as difficult to distinguish from himself as it is for the sufis and saints to distinguish between Ishwar and Allah. I call this character my Missing Other, for even though he is a flower of my own imagination no one is more oblivious of its fragrance than myself. . . To distinguish him from other Missing Persons we may call him Zameer Ehmud Khan 'Laapata' Bhopali. . . The more I love life the more this Laapata Bhopali grows detached from it. The incidents in my life which I wish to disregard and forget, in an attempt to launch a Samjhauta Express between my past and my future, are the very milestones where this Laapata wishes to pause and rest. Indeed Laapata Bhopali is the termite who has fed and prospered on the waste of my personality, my body, my soul.

Translated by Harish Trivedi



no-changers and the pro-changers in Telugu prose. The now-defunct monthly magazine *Bharati* gave literary status and dignity to the spoken language of the people in both poetry and prose and broadly speaking, the language thus evolved continues to be the standard language of Telugu literature today. It is in the pages *Bharathi* that one can find the first floriscence of modern Telugu literature.

Literary journals, newspapers and periodicals have come to exercise a great influence on modern trends in Telugu literature. They define the age and give it its name. Different literary epochs have been named after journals like *Arunatara*, *Gabbilam* and *Bhoomika*. *Arunatara* has a preference for literary studies which search for aesthetic dimensions arising out of the organic interrelationship between literature and social life. The magazine has introduced many poets who subsequently blossomed into front rankers in Telugu poetry. Individual issues of *Arunatara* are either miscellaneous or special numbers focussing on single writers, works or other significant themes. Some of its special numbers like those on Ravi Sastry (153-January, 1994) and Chalam (157 May 1994) are thoughtfully conceived and carefully planned. *Gabbilam* carried perceptive articles related to Dalit life and literature by scholars and academics. *Bhoomika*, edited by Kondaveeti Satyavathi presents poems, songs, stories from the far and near and children's literature.

*Chaitanya Kavitha* a journal devoted exclusively to poetry is edited by Professor T.V. Subba Rao and Dr. R.V.S. Sundaram. It publishes metrical compositions, songs as well as translations from other languages. Besides creative writings, *Sravanthi* publishes book reviews. It belongs to the category of *Chaitanya Kavitha Misimi* a monthly edited by Annapa Reddy.

*The Sunday issues of Telugu dailies feature book reviews, poetry, articles and interviews with literateurs. The literary pages of Andhra Jyothi and Andhra Prabha reflect new ground broken by writers of today. The views and literary ideals of writers from different schools of thought are enunciated, expressed and practised in these pages.*

Venkateshwara Reddy publishes articles dealing with various aspects of literature. The other major journal is the famous *Rachana* with which are associated stalwarts of Telugu literature like Kalipatnam Rama Rao, Kavana Sarma and Kethu Vishwanatha Reddy. This magazine is popular and creditably maintains a high standard. It has created a reading public, intensified popular interest, served as a model and also reared a band of enthusiastic writers. It has largely contributed to the rapid growth and enormous popularity of modern Telugu short story. *Telugu*, the property of Telugu Akademi, publishes criticism on Telugu literature covering all periods—classical, medieval, modern and contemporary. Telugu Akademi disclaims responsibility for statements of facts or opinions made by contributors to the magazine's columns. *Telugu* occasionally publishes stories. The most up-to-date trends of Telugu literature particularly the work of young poets, short story writers and critics are reflected in the vigorous monthly magazine *Ashwanam*. All literary genres—poetry, short story, novel-etches and essays are cultivated in its pages. New ideas and fashions in literature are the special merits of the magazine. It has created a stir by encouraging young writers to experiment in various forms of literature. *Ashwanam* has been the pivot of a modern intellectual and literary movement, a movement which may be likened to a great river embracing many small and apparently insignificant tributaries all of them ultimately converging by winding courses into the great stream and thereby enlarging and reinforcing Telugu literature in all its variety and profundity.

The Sunday issues of Telugu dailies feature book reviews, poetry, articles and interviews with literateurs. The literary pages of *Andhra Jyothi* and *Andhra Prabha* reflect new ground broken by writers of today. The views and literary ideals of writers from different schools of thought are enunciated, expressed and practised in these pages. The Telugu literary journals and the Sunday issues of Telugu dailies run parallel and are engaged in long drawn polemics on literary and sometimes social problems. Controversies under the stewardship of masters such as G. Laxminarsaiah, B. Tirupathi Rao, HRK, S. Ramulu, K. Lalitha, Tejaswini Niranjana, Susie Tharu and Chekuri Rama Rao have contributed in no small measure to the enrichment of Telugu literature.

*Turai Muralidhar is a Ph.D. student in the Department of English, Kakatiya University, Warangal, Andhra Pradesh.*

## Austen—From Classic to Postmodern

Dhananjay Kapse

JANE AUSTEN: AN ANTHOLOGY OF RECENT CRITICISM

Edited by Harish Trivedi

Pencraft, Delhi, 1996, pp. 254, Rs. 280.00

“There is a great deal of sex in the novels of Jane Austen” begins Nicholas E. Preus’s “Sexuality in *Emma*: A Case History” in the book under review. Before you react with outraged literary sensitivity or salacious interest, let me hasten to clarify that this is not another attempt to make Jane Austen the hottest commercial property in Hollywood. Sexuality for Preus is not what most people take it to be, but rather the social generation and expression of the sexual instinct with all its complex networks of verbalization and ritual within the matrix of individual relationships. This kind of investigation would have been impossible without Michel Foucault’s monumental *History of Sexuality*, and Preus’s essay is obviously indebted to it.

Foucault and other ‘theorists’ are conspicuously present in this collection of recent essays—most of them published between 1989–1992. “Jane Austen and Theory” would have been an equally appropriate title. The editor in his introduction gives a bird’s eye view of developments in Jane Austen criticism, right from 1816, the year before she died, to the 1990s. It is indispensable reading if one wants to understand the implications of these recent theoretical developments. Even otherwise his characteristic witticisms impart a much needed leavening to what follows.

If from the beginning the world was divided into Janites and Janophobes (e.g. Walter Scott vs. Charlotte Brontë), the terms of debate don’t seem to have changed for more than one and a quarter century. Her ‘ivory-work’, ‘classicism’ and ‘elegance’ were contrasted with her narrowness, conformism and lack of acquaintance with passions. The eulogy-dismissal binary opposition gave way to a different kind of reading with the appearance of the work of D.W. Harding and Marvin Mudrick in the 1940s, and for the next 40 years analysis rather than appreciation or deprecation was the key-word. With the stranglehold of ‘theory’ in the western

*The editor in his introduction gives a bird’s eye view of developments in Jane Austen criticism, right from 1816, the year before she died, to the 1990s. It is indispensable reading if one wants to understand the implications of these recent theoretical developments. Even otherwise his characteristic witticisms impart a much needed leavening to what follows.*

academy it was inevitable that this most ‘classic’ of authors could not remain immune to it and after 1980 the various new insights provided by literary theory—premised on radically different ideas of self, language and representation—have been harnessed to read Jane Austen in various different ways and this volume is a collection of thirteen such essays, ten previously published abroad in journals or books and three published here for the first time.

It is certainly legitimate to wonder about the ‘use’ or ‘relevance’ of such interpretations except to the minuscule academic community. For neither the world nor the way we look at it have changed despite criticism’s tall claims. But then this kind of reductionism can be taken much further, about the use or relevance of any book or indeed of life itself. What one appreciates about this book, despite certain problems, is its strong focus on the socio-political context not only of the author but also the reader, and for a change, the ‘Indian’ reader of canonical English literature.

If you are already opposed to the hegemony of academic(-ised) or theoretical readings, the two concluding essays by Edward Neill and Robyn



Warhol may feed further fuel to your resistance. Warhol's "The Look, the Body, and the Heroine: A Feminist-Narratological Reading of *Persuasion*" engages in the study of narrative structures and strategies in the context of cultural constructions of gender. Pulling away from historical criticism, she asks the question, "What happens when a feminist resists the powerful temptation to think of Jane Austen's heroines as persons and scrutinizes them as functions of texts, instead? 'We have surely come a long way since the 1850s when G.H. Lewes said that Elizabeth Bennet was 'one of the few heroines one would seriously like to marry'." Warhol does have some interesting discussion of a heroine's access to knowledge, through the act of looking (the "female gaze") and to pleasure, through textual consciousness of the body, but the arid style and excessive jargon mar this essay as well as Edward Neill's "Between Deference and Destruction: 'Situations' of Recent Critical Theory and Jane Austen's *Emma*".

I am in the academy, so I am reasonably familiar with these debates, but even my patience was tried by Peter Conrad's "Irony in *Pride and Prejudice*". One wonders how the editor could have overlooked wild, sweeping, unsubstantiated generalizations such as, "Jane Austen is a great novelist despite herself", "her creativity is a reflex not of generosity but of baffled impotent ill-will". Conrad sees in her novels 'Jane Austen's own inability to control her characters', for him 'the novelist longs for change but is too bleakly honest to imagine that it is likely.' It's not just sloppy writing that is the issue here but whether the critic is saying anything meaningful. Frank Kermode in a devastating piece of sarcasm once wrote, "I confess to doubting that a book capable of eliciting the unstinted admiration of Peter Conrad can be worth reading". So I will leave it at that.

You only have to read Meenakshi Mukherjee's "To hear my uncle talk of the West Indies" to see criticism that has depth as well as elegance. Starting with the premise that Jane Austen, unlike a lot of her characters, was neither unaware of nor indifferent to the larger world outside England, she goes on to provide a detailed analysis of Austen's depiction of the English social system. Her conclusion provides a vital corrective to Peter Conrad's excesses:

Jane Austen's novels involve us in insoluble problems about the breadth/narrowness of her vision, the humanistic/hierarchical basis of her values, and the degree of mobility/stasis in her narrative design. The indeterminacy is manipulated

through ironic focussing, the irony being not always against others but sometimes turned inward.

Edward Said's "Jane Austen and Empire: *Mansfield Park*" also develops further Raymond Williams' seminal formulation that the society in Austen's novels is "an acquisitive high bourgeois society at the point of its most evident interlocking with agrarian capitalism that is itself mediated by inherited titles and the making of family names". Proposing that geography is not a neutral fact, any more than class and gender are neutral facts, Said reads *Mansfield Park* as part of the structure of an expanding imperialist venture in which Austen synchronizes domestic with international authority, making it plain that the values associated with such higher things as ordination, law and propriety must be grounded firmly in actual rule over and possession of territory.

These two essays are, for me, the highlights of this volume, refreshingly free of jargon, rigorously argued and full of original insights. Amy Smith's "Northanger Abbey and the Sentimental Novel" is more informative than illuminating and David Lodge does a much better job of placing Austen in the tradition of the novel in his "Jane Austen's Novels: Form and Structure", with an exemplary use of Russian Formalism. Julia Prewitt's "Women and Marriage in *Pride and Prejudice*" written specially for this volume, both focus on how Austen's novels convey an idea of everyday existence centered around the experiences of marriage and family life. Oliver MacDonagh's very materialistic (literally) reading of *Sense and Sensibility* gives us the economic knowledge that Jane Austen acquired, the economic knowledge that the novel displays and some of the implications of the relationship between the two.

Another interesting and welcome feature of this book—indeed of the New Orientations series—is an account of classroom experiences of teaching and studying Jane Austen in India. So you have a Delhi University student proposing that students in India can read Jane Austen with more affinity than students in the West because the socio-economic-cultural transitions that Austen was talking about are happening in India today while western students need to take an imaginative leap. There is an interesting attempt to compare *Emma* with Premchand's *Nirmala*. These are not revolutionary or earthshaking but refreshing. They make you want to read or re-read the novels even if you are not an academic. What more can you want from a book of literary criticism?

Finally I must put in a word of appreciation about the quality of production of this book. The paper is good, the binding is handsome, and the price not unreasonable. Especially when one compares it with Macmillan's Casebook series. It is heartening to see an Indian publishing concern bringing out this excellent collection. It would have been even better had there not been so many typographical errors, (Pamberley instead of Pemberley, face instead of fact,

earned instead of unearned—all in the space of a few pages.) Moreover one also wishes for a "Further Reading" bibliography, other articles that he might have included but did not. More power to Pencraft, but can we demand similarly well-produced books on Indian authors please?

Dhananjay Kapse teaches at Kirorimal College, University of Delhi.

## Into India In Depth

Feisal Alkazi

INTO INDIA

Edited by Sally Moss

Book & Video Package published by Curriculum Corporation, Australia, 1997, pp. 202, price not mentioned.

RAINING SURPRISES: HENRY IN INDIA

Edited by Julia Fraser

Macmillan Education Australia, 1996, pp. 48, price not mentioned.

EXPLORING INDIA: TEACHER'S RESOURCE BOOK

Published by Macmillan Education Australia, 1996, pp. 64, price not mentioned.

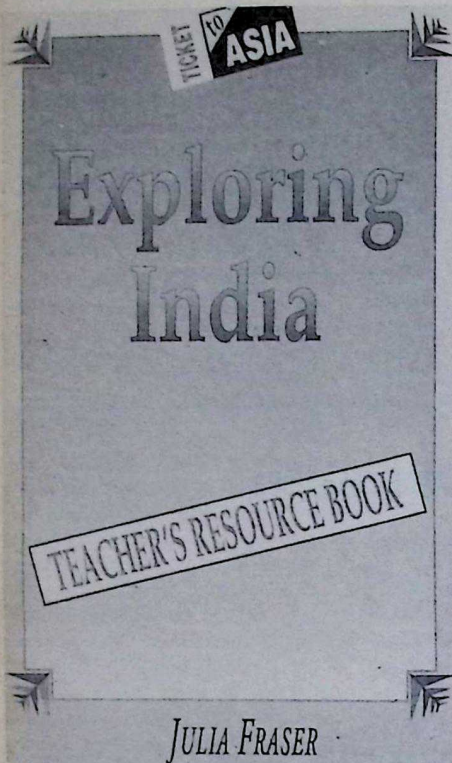
In an ever shrinking world where people from diverse cultures and backgrounds are increasingly working together, much more needs to be done at the level of school education to inform and educate, and even more importantly, challenge the prejudices and biases that exist. Such efforts, largely UK or USA based, come under the general title of Development Education, and are neatly slotted into the new social studies curriculum. I have worked extensively in the field of school education over the past 17 years. It therefore comes as a welcome bolt from the blue to have to review a series of publications in this area—from Australia! And my surprise turned into admiration when I poured over the first of these, an extremely well thought out (and brought out!) twin pack of video and book entitled *Into India*.

This pack has been published by the National Centre for South Asian Studies, a consortium of eight Australian universities committed to the education of young people in their own country. In a multicultural society such as

Australia, the large wave of Indian immigrants in the 80's and 90's, have necessitated a much greater focus on Indian studies. And the relief is that the material focusses much more on contemporary India—post 1947—than that familiar carping on the wonder that was India! *Into India* seeks to address a neglected area in Australian education, and as a trailblazing effort, it has much to recommend it. The focus all through is on India as 'an emerging industrial and technical giant in the Asia Pacific region' with 'a sizable and prosperous middleclass.'

The choice of what to include and the organization of the material breaks a lot of new ground. The approach throughout is that by understanding the detail and investigating it in depth, you can begin to decipher and unravel the whole picture. This movement from micro to macro is evident in every chapter. The book begins with a chapter "Threads of time" that narrates the long history of Indian textiles, and through it provides an insight into technological innovation, assimilation





over a long period of time.'

Through a series of structured activities for the student to do, and investigations for him/her to carry out, this chapter brings alive the politicisation of every aspect of our lives. Consider this activity.

*Politics. What do you think of when you hear this word? Write down all the things that come to your mind. Share your ideas with the rest of the class. In two sentences, describe the main features of the class's full list of the words that were suggested. Why do you think you have these opinions about politics?*

*Think about all the things you did yesterday, even down to things that may seem trivial—such as brushing your teeth or listening to the radio. Once you have thought about*

*those, make a list.*

*Now use a different colour to circle those activities or items that you think have been under the direct or indirect influence of government decisions. (For example, the radio station you listened to would have had to apply for a licence to broadcast, the radio itself was probably imported from another country. Importers are affected by government policies regarding import quotas and tariffs. The water that you used for your shower may have been piped from government built dams)*

*How many items did you circle in your list? Choose three of these items to describe how political decisions were involved in the activities that you listed.*

The second video *Freedom of Choice* explores the same theme by following through the electoral process in St. Thomas' School, Delhi along with a long interview with T.N. Seshan, intercut with the omnipresent Republic Day Parade. "How has India remained a democracy without the army taking over?" is the question posed here—and it is answered by focussing on three pro-democracy institutions: the free press, the academics and intellectuals and the legal process. The film then rather haphazardly moves from the Indian countryside to MGR to Swami Agnivesh. However this is certainly one of the tighter video episodes of the five.

The following section focusses on economics—through looking at the phenomenal growth in the diamond cutting industry, the huge purchasing power of the Indian middle class (with interesting tables of the increase in consumption of consumer goods and

heading the list is 'the mosquito coil!') and on the liberalization of the economy.

The following two video sequences are poorly made—rambling in their style, and consequently diffused in their focus. Relying on interviews and not wanting to hold talking heads on screen, the illustrative footage often wanders far from the theme and is extraneous. *At the Cutting Edge* follows through the diamond chain, from the Argyle mines in Australia to their cutting and polishing in Mumbai. It skims over several important points that could have been pursued in detail—a 15 year old who has left the rural countryside for a job in urban India, the contrast of working conditions in the diamond industry in Australia and India, the fact that often 70% of those employed are women... Also the illustrative footage used is often drab and boring, not unlike some of our substandard DD documentaries! The rather strangely titled *Love Is In The Air* on the environmental crisis, moves from the students of a school in Agra studying the impact of acid rain on the Taj, to the environmentally sound design of a traditional Indian house, to the haphazard growth of Agra to neem toothbrushes! As with all the other videos (with the exception of a brief sequence in the last) this video is also North India-centric. As with a lot of material developed on India in the first world, the images and shooting are all drawn from that triangle of Delhi—Jaipur—Agra. The furthest South one gets is Mumbai! So while the text of the book is not bound by stereotype, the videos often are stereotyped, regularly going off the beaten track to shoot exotic India—children in a cycrickshaw going to school, the decaying urban landscape, the roadside dhaba, the huge movie posters. All in all both these particular video segments are poorly conceived and put together, at least to an Indian viewer!

"Serving The Symbols", a textual section on the Indian ecological crises follows. Included in this section is *The Endangered Tiger*, a detailed simulation game on Project Tiger, that draws students into debating the very real issue of conservation of wildlife, by playing the roles of park officials, environment activists, poaching gangs, indigenous people etc., each with their own specific agenda to pursue. The game takes an even more exciting turn when a surprise element is introduced—news of a sensational raid exposing a 90 crore haul of tiger related products. Media representatives, nearby agriculturists and others then enter the fray. After the game is over, there is a detailed debriefing suggestion that each group look at the realities of

the situations represented in the game. This is followed by a series of further research exercises. In all such an activity would take 7 fifty minutes periods, and proves the point that real learning can also be tremendous fun.

This is of course followed by the inevitable story on pollution and the Taj, and documentation of the age of life style of a very unique community the Koli fisherfolk of Mumbai, who are sandwiched between Cuffe Parade and Nariman Point. The last section is on the changing role of women, and on Indian TV and teenagers! Much of the material excerpted here is from *India Today* articles of the past few years. The last video segment of *Dreams, Mother in Law and Videotape* opens with the usual aerobic dance sequence from a Hindi movie. Javed Akhtar in a delightful brief interview describes Indian cinema as being the dreams of our society, an expression of the Indian psyche. The video then jumps from illustrating the joint family ethos, the arranged marriages versus love marriages, to a parallel debate between Australian teenagers and Indian ones on the institution of marriage. Enjoyable, gently provocative fare.

The book succeeds because of the innovative activities and investigation that have been suggested for the teacher to conduct with the students, such as the one on Project Tiger that has been detailed above, and which, to my mind, is a prime example of the book's pedagogical thrust.

However there are a couple of areas where the book does not totally succeed. One is the rather brief text for the student. While every chapter for the student is preceded by a detailed background note for the teacher which is comprehensive and informative, my own feeling is that the text for the student tends to be just too summarized. Further there is a lack of effective illustration, and a rather prosaic layout. Of course one can argue the point that the book is to be used in conjunction with the video that is teeming with a range of rich visuals. But all the same keeping in mind the visual savviness of today's young person, the rather sparse, old-fashioned, almost NCERT (!) drawing leave much to be desired. They are also too few and far between. Perhaps a much racier design style would capture the student participant.

Further one could debate the point of whether one should totally avoid talking about poverty in India in such material that has been devised for the uninformed reader. To focus only on the burgeoning middleclass as being representative of an Indian reality is questionable. Also this book would have been even more effective if there



the gam  
of furth  
an activ  
periods, a  
arning c  
ed by t  
n and t  
he age o  
communi  
i, who li  
paradea  
ction is c  
n, and o  
uch of t  
from Ind  
years. Th  
s, Moha  
with th  
ce from  
r in a d  
bes India  
of our s  
mps from  
ethos, th  
love ma  
e betwe  
dian on  
ge. Enjo  
se of th  
stigation  
he teach  
s, such  
t has be  
my min  
ok's ped  
le of are  
y succe  
or the st  
or the st  
led back  
which i  
ative, m  
or the st  
marized  
tive illu  
ayout. C  
at that t  
ction wi  
h a rang  
e keepin  
of today  
arse, o  
drawing  
y are ab  
perhaps  
d captu  
the poi  
lly avo  
a in suc  
ed for th  
s only o  
as being  
reality  
k would  
e if the

had been more of a continuity between the chapters. In this way through structured activities the student would have been led to co-relate and assimilate material, which is at the present diverse and segmented. This would help the student get a sense of 'the whole picture.'

*Raining Surprises* is a picture album of the visit of a young Australian boy to India, with a few lines of text accompanying the photographs on each page. The acknowledgement page sums up the mission of the book: 'to create a new generation of Asia-literate Australians.' It is easy to describe what the book is like, by quoting the opening lines, 'This storybook is for all the kids in grade 6C, because I've been to India and its not what they said it was like at all. This is about my India. A place full of surprises everywhere I looked.'

Each page caters to, and would delight the young reader—with titles like 'Everyone loves cricket' or 'A good horn, good brakes and good luck' as the three requisites to survive traffic in Delhi!

To support *Raining Surprises*, there is a teacher's book which supplements the brief information included on each page of the children's book. Here there are activities to do, recipes and draw-

ings (including a delightful one that plays around with the shape of the Sydney Opera House to create the Lotus Temple in Delhi!) There is a lot of background information on geography, history, culture, social problems, not organized conventionally, but as 'A day in the life of Sujeet,' 'What is on TV tonight,' or 'How to grow your own Silkworms'.

All in all these three publications are noteworthy because the student reader is encouraged to develop a concept of Asia, not only in geographic terms, but also in relation to history, culture and economics. An appreciation of the linkages between Asian nations, and their diversity can go a long way to help the student identify the roots of their negative stereotypes and analyze the basis of these in perceptions based on imperialism, racism, ethnocentrism and sexism. Positive values of social justice, democracy and equal opportunity and of ecological sustainability are built into the book.

Definitely worth acquiring, even for an Indian school library!

*Feisal Alkazi is an educationist and a media person.*

## A Book Store with a View

By Sanjoy Hazarika

**O**n Colombo's busy Galle Road—which as the name suggests is a road that does lead to a town named Galle (not the Biblical one but one that is overwhelmingly beautiful by the Indian Ocean side)—is a building that proudly advertises one of Sri Lanka's best known names: Vijitha Yapa Book Shop.

Starting from scratch in 1992, facing hostility from dominant booksellers and magazine vendors who had monopolised the book trade for decades in Sri Lanka, Vijitha Yapa (that indeed is the name of the owner), a small, cheerful man with a mischievous grin that camouflages a razor-sharp business mind and decades of active journalism (he has worked in India, edited two major Sri Lankan dailies and writes for *The Times*, London, out of his country) now presides over a chain of book stores in the capital and elsewhere. And he is master of the international magazine trade on the island.

The flagship store is, of course, the shop at Unity Plaza which is on two levels, stores 180,000 titles and sprawls over 10,000 square feet. It's ideally located: right next to the Majestic City Shopping Mall which brings potential buyers and in the heart of Colombo's busy commercial district.

There are text books and stationary areas, CDs as well as the latest bestsellers in paperback. Newspapers too are stocked including the *International Herald Tribune*. There is a section on English such as Jane Austen, Shakespeare, Eliot and Emily Bronte are specially popular. The international bestsellers do brisk business here in the land of Yapa: John Grisham, Frederick Forsyth, Daniel Steele and Sidney Sheldon.

But Sri Lanka's own books are holding their own in the literary world and doing well at home as well—Michael Ondaatje (*The English Patient* and other luminous novels), Carl Muller and his sardonic observations of life in Sri Lanka, Colin De Silva and John Gunsekhar.

There is a growing stable of Sri Lankan writers who are published locally. Some are locally popular like Punyakante Wijenaike's whose *Giraya* (the slicer used for cutting areca nut) has been made into a television serial. But as in India, those who write in Sinhala are more widely read.

And in the non-fiction category, it is hardly surprising that J.N. Dixit's mag-

num opus on his years in Colombo as well as V.N. Narayanaswamy's book on the Tamil "Tigers" are best-sellers. Dixit's book has been translated into Sinhala and is going to be a continuing success, Yapa says, who is now going into publishing in a modest way, beginning with Dixit. His turnover has gone from zero in 1992, when he began with his wife Lalane, who is as deeply involved in the daily running of the company and business, to over 70 million rupees (Sri Lankan).

There are already three book shops, including the latest in a very upmarket shopping mall where the latest music plays and Colombo's beautiful people go to shop, in the Sri Lankan capital. There are three more, in Galle, Negombo and at Kandy in the hills. Yapa plans to open a bookshop now in Jaffna.

Browsers are encouraged. They may not buy any titles but they will see the latest and get them from people who will. The Vijitha Yapa Bookshop is more than a business; it encourages the reading habit and has delightful persons like Rohan Wijesekhar, the manager in the main store, who helps people make choices, recommends titles and buys books himself to read.

And despite the pressures of living in a war-torn land, Yapa, a small man with a big heart and a ready smile and a fund of stories, both tragic and delightful, has found an island of enlightenment for himself and his readers.

Sanjoy Hazarika

The village of Sosore—Jaranga  
Is at the heart

Of a deep, dense, forest,  
O my elder brother

Tell me if I should stay there?

I had gone to fetch water  
And my binda was transformed  
Into a snake.

O my elder brother, how will I stay  
there,

I had gone to fetch firewood  
And my axe became a tiger,  
O my elder brother  
Tell me how to stay there.

(A Jataka song of Mundas) 'The Awakened Wind'—Sitakant Mahapatra

From *Languages of Indigenous Peoples of India: The Ethnic Space*

Spring here, Spring there  
And spring is everywhere.

On this forest and on that  
On this tree and on that  
On the leaves, in the leaves,  
On the flower, within the flowers,

Spring here, spring there  
And spring is everywhere.

Above, below, the red and the green  
Sky, lands, filled with laughter and dance  
The cuckoo and the nightingale, coos and sings  
My heart pierced with all these things.

Spring here, spring there  
And spring is everywhere.

Upon this cornfield and on that  
In this underwood and through that  
The fragrant wind jostles through  
Clouds in the sky and clouds on earth  
And the wind blows my heart about.

Spring here, spring there  
And spring is everywhere.

(A Children's song written by Tabu Taid. Translated by Satish C. Abbi)  
From *Languages of Indigenous Peoples of India: The Ethnic Space*



## Books-in-Brief

K.P. Shankaran

THE TOUCH OF MIDAS edited by Ziauddin Sardar. The Other India Press, Mapusa, Goa, 1997, pp. 253, Rs. 150.00

The book under review contains twelve papers presented at two seminars held in Stockholm and in Grenada respectively in the years 1981 and 1982, under the general theme 'Science and Technology of Islam in the West: A Synthesis'.

According to the editor Ziauddin Sardar, contemporary science has the touch of Midas. On the one hand it has brought mankind riches beyond dreams; on the other it poses a serious threat to the very existence of the human species. Sardar is obviously referring to the problems created by technological development, over-industrialization, environmental degradation and the like. One might rightly think that these allegations do not apply to pure science and that it is unfair to talk of the crisis in science without making a distinction between the two. But Ziauddin Sardar's point seems to be that the distinction between pure science and applied science is really a matter of definition and argument. Research programmes, for instance are themselves frequently selected not for their theoretical content but for their market appeal. As Robert Wall-gate, the European editor of *Nature*, points out in his contribution, solid state physics has progressed largely because of the search for new material by the electronic industry.

The word 'contemporary' in Sardar's phrase 'Contemporary Science' has a special significance and deserves to be noted. This author and all the other Muslim scholars who have contributed to this volume have tried to argue that they are not against science 'per se'. They see no conflict whatsoever between science and Islam. Contemporary science however, they argue, is anti-Islamic and Eurocentric as well. In other words contemporary science is seen as a value-laden enterprise which is designed primarily to create a Eurocentric World Order.

Interestingly enough many of the European scholars whose papers appear with those of the non-European Muslim contributors, tend to agree that science is not value-neutral. While it may not be particularly anti-Islamic as the Muslim scholars have tried to portray, they seem to admit that Science's eurocentricity is difficult to deny. Raveto, the historian of science, seems to be saying precisely this when he states that the civilization based on science was destructive to ALL other civilizational enterprises. In this context the papers of Alison Ravetz and Lloyd Timberlake are significant. The former is a historian of architecture while Timberlake is the editorial director of *Earthscan*. Their contributions can be read as a critique of the idea of the Europeanization of the globe. Alison Ravetz discusses the result of Europeanization as it appears in some of the Islamic countries. It created, according to her, a cultural dependency in which ex-colonial societies were obsessed by their own inferiority and by the superiority of western technology and expertise. This caused them to disparage their own rich vernacular traditions and adopt western type plans and buildings that would in their eyes place them in the modern world. Timberlake observes that one of the main victims of the blind import of western technology and the uncritical imitation of western strategies of development has been Islamic architecture. Islamic Architecture was once the best in the world. It was beautiful. It turned the glare of the desert sun into pleasing patterns of light by the use of lattices. Made of earth and tiles, it was cool in summer and warm in winter. It trapped breezes and released them gently throughout the structure, thereby cooling the occupants. It resisted the climate for hundreds of years. Today, he says, Islamic nations are relying on designs of steel, glass and cement, mostly imported from the West. These buildings are ugly, expensive, energy intensive and uncomfortable in the local climate.

We have to understand the idea of Islamic Science—which is the main theme of the Muslim contributors—against this background of gloom and disorientation. The Europeanization of the globe was indeed a historical disaster. But once this happened, the desire for a pre-Europeanized world order, however tempting that might look, deserves to be taken with a pinch of salt.

The idea of Islamic Science is introduced by Husain Sadar in his paper entitled 'Science and Islam: Is there a conflict?' Sadar seems to suggest that Islam unlike Christianity is very science-friendly. He quotes relevant passages from the Quran to support his claim. However he concludes by saying that "both the means and ends of science must submit to Quranic ideals". He does not seem to notice that science came to clash with Christianity not because Christianity was inherently unscientific but because the science which emerged with the advent of printing in

Europe's early modern period, had a mind of its own and refused to submit both its means and ends to Biblical ideals. Given this fact, any attempt by Islam to confine science within Quranic injunctions, could also result in a similar divide between Science and Islam. Hence Hussain Sadar's claim of Islam, unlike Christianity, being science-friendly, appears rather far-fetched.

An interesting play of the concept of Jihad occurs in Gulzar Haidar's paper entitled 'Habitat and values in Islam: a conceptual formulation of a Islamic City'. Jihad is defined as implying a struggle 'directed towards the establishment of a framework for facilitating the divine purpose of Islam. In this sense, Muslims are expected to constitute a very active, dynamic and goal-oriented society, one that is willing to sacrifice even life if there ever is a final choice, between right and wrong both Quranically defined.

Given the significance of 'Jihad' in Islam, the non-Muslim may well question Islam's ability to tolerate non-Islamic forms of culture. Without a satisfactory answer to this query, Muslim intellectuals cannot hope to enlist the support of non-Muslims (some Muslims as well) in their endeavour to cure science of its touch of Midas. The non Muslim would undoubtedly not wish to fall from the frying-pan into the fire.

K.P. Shankaran teaches in the Department of Philosophy, St. Stephen's College, Delhi.

S.O. Junare

TOTAL MANAGEMENT BY RATIOS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH by Hrishikesh Bhattacharya. Sage Publications, India, New Delhi, pp. 340, Rs. 350.00 (hardback)

The subject matter of financial management has been changing at a rapid pace. Three decades ago, the scope of financial management was limited to the raising of funds, whenever needed, and little significance was attached to financial decision making and problem solving. But now the field of financial management has become extremely wide. The growing importance of the subject is indeed due to several challenges and opportunities faced by the Indian organizations in the continuously changing dimension of their size, management style, legislation and socio-political and economic situations. Considering the challenges before the business organizations the financial manager has to ensure that funds are raised economically and used in the most efficient and effective manner. Because of this change in emphasis, the descriptive treatment of the subject of financial management is being replaced by a growing analytical content.

In financial management Ratio Analysis is considered a powerful tool of financial analysis. A ratio is used as a benchmark for evaluating the financial position and performance of a firm. On the other hand, the usefulness and importance of Ratio has become a wider decision oriented concept. A carefully chosen ratio or set of ratios could be both information as well as a tool of decision making and control in every area of management.

The book under review *Total Management By Ratios* is a pioneering work. Existing works in the field have focused only on a particular segments such as accounting ratios or financial management. In contrast, the study provides an integrated approach, which enables the reader to take both a functional and holistic view of business organizations.

The book is divided into seven chapters. In chapter 1, the author has given a comprehensive account of historical developments in the use of ratios (in different phases), particularly in financial analysis, and businesses have been reviewed.

In chapter 2, the author has discussed an approach of model towards integrating business function through ratio analysis. The chapter highlights the importance of management information system and management control through ratio analysis. It also highlights various financial parameters for management control, technical control, managing optimal information, decision-making and management control, standards of comparison through ratios for decision-making and integrated approach.

In chapters 3 and 4, the author has discussed various ratios for financial management and broadly divided the management function between operational management and financial management, marketing management and sales management, working capital management and debt service management. All these functions are then integrated by developing a simple model for measuring and monitoring managerial efficiency.

In chapter 5, the author presents alternative ratio models for the measurement and monitoring of efficiency of important management functions. The author applies his ratio analytical framework, utilizing primary data relating to a real life



situation to determine a unique growth rate beyond which an enterprise is likely to fail.

In the next two chapters, the author explains the ratios which can be used as predictor variables to enable a manager to evolve strategies for growth and prevent the business from going bankrupt. In chapter 6, cash flow of a business are captured through an algebraic model. A summary of findings from empirical research is presented to highlight growth constraints followed by the development of simple ratio analytic growth model.

In chapter 7 the author explains the uses of ratios for predicting business failure and gives some illustrations in which ratio analysis is used as a predictor variable to enable the manager to evolve strategies for growth as also to prevent the business from going bankrupt. However, topics like "Ratios for Operating Management" and "Ratios for financial Management" elaborated in the book require more illustrations with practical cases for easy understanding. Though the author has presented maximum ratios for different functions of management, some of the ratios were found common in different functions of the management.

In going beyond the conventional analysis of financial statements and in integrating the entire gamut of management functions through ratio structures, this book on ratio analysis will be of considerable interest to professional managers and to bankers for credit appraisal. It is useful for university students and other professional students of like ICWA, CA, ICAI, CFA etc. and researchers also.

S.O. Junare is a Faculty Member at the Udaybhansinhji Institute of Cooperative Management, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

**SPEAKING OF AYURVEDIC HERBAL CURES** by T.L. Devaraj. Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, Rs. 65.00

*Speaking of Ayurvedic Herbal Cures* is by Dr. T.L. Devaraj, an eminent Ayurvedic physician and former Professor and Head of the Department of Dravyaguna and Panchakarma, Government College of Indian Medicine, Mysore and Principal, Government Tarantha Ayurveda Medical College, Bellary. He is, presently, the

Deputy Director of Ayurveda in the Department of Indian systems of Medicine and Homeopathy, Karnataka. An author of more than 15 books on Ayurveda, he has been honoured with an International Award for his outstanding contribution to Ayurveda.

Ayurveda, as we all know, is one of the most ancient systems of medicine, that has its origin in India. It has proven cures for a number of diseases both chronic and otherwise. In the Ayurvedic system the medicines mostly of indigenous herbs, where extracts from roots, barks, leaves, flowers and fruits are used in given proportions to cure a particular ailment. In the present book the author has presented herbal cures for 75 diseases like Adenitis, Anorexia, Arthritis, Bleeding nose, Hemorrhoids, Bronchial Asthma, Coryza, skin diseases, High blood pressure etc. The names of each herb are given in Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Latin. To facilitate the user/reader to identify the herbs before use, sketches/photos of each plant is given. The author has also dealt with the properties, composition and usage and the prescribed dosage for most of the herbs. So, this book would be useful to students of Ayurveda as well as those who would like to use the commonly available herbs to cure themselves specially common in ailments like coryza, constipation, dyspepsia etc. Some of the things of common use like lemon, ginger, garlic, radish, beetle leaves, tulsi leaves, coriander are great healers as well and Dr. Devraj has dealt with these properties in relation to the diseases they cure. At a time when allopathic treatment has become very costly and quite beyond the common man's reach the alternative systems of medicines are definitely gaining ground and this book would be a welcome addition to the library of practitioners of these systems. The remedies suggested in this book are well worth trying since they are cost-effective and completely free of side effects.

However, there are a few avoidable mistakes in translating the names of some herbs in Tamil and Telugu. For e.g., jackfruit has been translated as Panasa in Tamil, while it should be Palakkai or Palapazham, jamoon as shambu instead of Navalpazham, Inji instead of sukku/chukku for sonto/dry ginger and similarly miriyali in Telugu is spelt as Meriyalu and cinamen has been translated as saralipu instead of chakka. In a book of such scholarship the author should have paid closer attention to such details as correct translations and correct spellings.

Jaya Varadakrishnamachari

#### BOOK NEWS

#### BOOK NEWS

#### BOOK NEWS

#### BOOK NEWS

#### BOOK NEWS

#### BOOK NEWS

#### ■ CULTURE STUDIES

*The Hindu Culture: A Clear and Concise Summary for Youngsters*  
Mrinal Bali

Starting from a study of nature rather than from voluminous tomes of the Hindu culture the author explains the basics of Hindu culture to young people in a manner and language they relate to and understand.  
Youngster Publications, Pune, 1997, pp. 78, Rs. 120.00

*Visions of Modernity*  
Scott McQuire

This book explores the relationship between technology, society and identity that underpins contemporary media culture. It offers an admirable overview of modern visual culture and discusses a wide range of debates in cultural theory.  
Sage Publications, 1998, pp. 279, £45.00

#### ■ HISTORY

*In the Meadows of Gold: Telling Tales of the Swargadeos at the Cross roads of Assam*  
Sayeeda Yasmin Saikia  
This book is written in two sections, the

first is a translation of a selection of indigenous narratives called *buranjis* and the second section is an analysis of the cult of *swargadeo*.  
Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1997, pp. 244, Rs. 395.00

*Colonialism, Property and the State*  
Dharma Kumar

The author examines diverse issues that have been important in history writing in India such as the nature of the colonial state, changes in land distribution, the invisible sector and the extent of taxation in Mughal and British India. The essays are grouped under separate heads—the Madras Presidency, land, comparative studies of India, Indonesia and China and the evolution of the colonial states.  
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 385, Rs. 595.00

*Divide and Quit: An Eyewitness Account of the Partition of India*  
Penderel Moon

During the turmoil leading up to Partition the author a member of the ICS was posted at Bahawalpur and he gives a first hand account of the manifestations of communal frenzy and the efforts to stem the tide of terror. First

published in 1961 by Chatto and Windus it is a classic piece of writing on the period.

Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 324, Rs. 295.00

#### ■ INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

*Prospects for Democracy in Asia*  
Tatu Vanhanen

The purpose of this book is to evaluate prospects for democracy in Asia focussing attention on the contemporary state of democracy in various Asian countries in the period 1991–1996.

Sterling Publishers, 1998, pp. 140, Rs. 295.00

*The Afghan Turmoil: Changing Equations*  
Sreedhar and Mahendra Ved

In terms of time if not ferocity and destruction, the on-going conflict in Afghanistan has outstripped Vietnam. Progress has been halted, families starve because women, their menfolk dead, cannot work. Dubbed a civil war it is a continuing war with no end in sight.

Himalayan Books, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 222, Rs. 350.00

*People's Rights: Social Movements and the State in the Third World*

Edited by Manoranjan Mohanty, Partha Nath Mukherji with Olle Törnquist  
The case studies here from Asia and Africa of both successful and unsuccessful movements illustrate the nature of dilemmas faced by these social movements while problematising the dichotomy between class politics and social movements. The contributors challenge the dominant political theory of capitalist globalisation and reaffirm some of the primary values of the anti-colonial struggle.  
Sage Publications, 1998, pp. 436, Rs. 495.00

#### ■ PUBLIC HEALTH

*Milk, Money and Madness: The Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding*

Naomi Baumslag and Dia L. Michels  
Here the authors examine the issue of breastfeeding and show how a product created to help sick children and foundlings was transformed into a powerful international industry with revenues of \$22 million a day. It provides parents and health professionals with information about this



critical life choice.

The Other India Press, 1997, pp. 256, Rs. 175.00

## ■ POLITICAL SCIENCE

*Quest for Power: Oppositional Movements and Post-Congress Politics in Uttar Pradesh*  
Zoya Hasan

Through an analysis of oppositional politics in India's most influential state, Uttar Pradesh, this book offers insights into the interplay between Congress and opposition politics in the transition to a post-Congress polity.  
Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 280, Rs. 445.

*Tackling Insurgency and Terrorism: Blueprint for Action*

Bhaskar Sarkar

For analysing an insurgency and predicting its outcome the author has devised a scorecard system wherein the key determining factors are rated for the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the insurgents and the security forces. He demonstrates the efficacy of this system by applying it in the case of Punjab, Kashmir and Assam. He also provides a complete blueprint for a counter insurgency campaign.

Vision Books, 1998, pp. 160, Rs. 280.00

*The Paradoxes of Partition (1937-47): Vol. 1 (1937-39)*

Edited by S.A.I. Tirmizi

The present volume first in a 3 volume study documents the critical factors that led to the partition and includes 579 original documents collected from private and public archives in India, Pakistan and the U.K. These documents account the events that occurred between 1937 and 1939 and revolve around the political activities of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.

Centre for Federal Studies, Hamdard University, Nanak Publications, 1998, pp. 1017, Rs. 2950

*Secularism, Democracy, Justice: Implication of Rawlsian Principles in India*

Nalini Rajan

The author utilizes the Rawlsian framework, set out in his theory of justice in 1971, and combines it with a Kantian perspective and defence of certain state policies to analyse four vital aspects of contemporary Indian reality: secularism, democracy, social justice and agency.

Sage Publications, 1998, pp. 220, Rs. 295.00

*Rules, Laws, Constitutions*

Edited by Satish Saberwal and Heiko

Sievers

This collection of essays examines the significance of rules and laws both in cognition and in social existence and their importance along with constitutions in large societies and politics.

Sage Publications, 1997, pp. 289, Rs. 350.00

*Secularism and Its Critics*

Edited by Rajeev Bhargava

Contributors here address issues such as: Is Secularism best understood as a doctrine of separation? Why, if at all, must religion be separated from political institutions? What does separation mean? Is secularism a comprehensive ethical doctrine which must alienate believers or is it a more narrowly defined political doctrine. Relatively independent of rival ethical and meta-physical conceptions to which believers are committed?

Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 550, Rs. 695.00

*States, Citizens and Outsiders: The Up-rooted Peoples of South Asia*

Edited by Tapan K. Bose and Rita Manchanda

South Asia is a region crowded with refugees and the displaced. It has the fourth largest concentration of refugees in the world and it is a situation that calls for urgent action. No South Asian state government has formulated a policy towards refugees or migrants and responses are mainly ad hoc. This book reflects the concern to humanise the response to the situation of refugees.

South Asia Forum for Human Rights, Nepal, distributed by Manohar Publishers, 1997, pp. 380, Rs. 450.00

## ■ SOCIOLOGY

*Caste System, Untouchability and the Depressed*

Edited by H. Kotani

The history of untouchability throws up a number of questions—to begin with what is the origin of social discrimination? What is its relationship with the concept of sin or pollution? From earliest times to the present this volume represents the endeavours of Japanese scholars to address these vital concerns.

Manohar Books, 1997, pp. 299, Rs. 500.00

*King of Hunters, Warriors and Shepherd: Essays on Khandoba* by Gunther-Dietz Sontheimer

Edited by Anne Feldhaus, Aditya Malik and Heidrun Bruchner

This volume brings together

Sontheimer's English language articles on Khandoba and the equivalent gods Mallanna in Andhra Pradesh and Mailara in Karnataka. Sontheimer understood the Khandoba cult to be a "mirror of Hinduism" and these articles take into account the differing traditions of a vast variety of castes and tribes.

Manohar Books, 1997, pp. 353, Rs. 600.00

*Caste, Class and Agrarian Relation in Kerala*

Abraham Vijayan

This work deals with the structural aspects underlying the complexities of agrarian relations of Kerala and also the mode of production and the concentration of land ownership pattern. The author has also studied how far caste hierarchy tends to coincide with class position, irrespective of groups and power structure.

Reliance Publishing House, 1997, pp. 214, Rs. 345.00

*The Mouths of People, the Voice of God: Buddhists and Muslims in a Frontier Community of Ladakh*

Smriti Srinivas

This book describes the social organisation and cultural processes of Buddhist and Muslim households in two of the Nubra valley in Ladakh. The frontier community is conceived as the locus of a ceaseless struggle between centripetal and centrifugal forces in the domains of language, religion and politics.

Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 219, Rs. 425.00

*Global Transformations: Post-modernity and Beyond*

Ananta K. Giri

The author argues that post-modernism despite its critical and deconstructive claim is still wedded to the deep structure of modernity and hence needs to be transcended. He locates post-modernism in processes of contemporary socio-cultural transformations as well as explores the promise of creative and critical alternatives in varieties of social and cultural movements of our times.

Rawat Publications, 1998, pp. 429, Rs. 675.00

*Conversions and Shifting Identities: Ramdeo Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan*  
Dominique Sila Khan

Using a combination of ethnographic data based on the description of shrines and rituals and of popular literature this book investigates Hindu 'folk' traditions in Rajasthan where the presence of Muslim elements is conspicuous.

Manohar Books, 1997, pp. 249, Rs. 450.00

# MANOHAR

## NEW BOOKS

### THE BETRAYAL OF EAST PAKISTAN

Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi (Retd.)

81-7304-256-X, 1998, 321p. maps Rs. 450

Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi of Pakistan directed the operations in 1971 Bangladesh war, which culminated in the birth of Bangladesh.

Being one of the main actors in the drama, Niazi presents his version of the war and seeks to clarify important questions relating to Pakistan's debacle in the operations. His account fills a huge gap in the recorded history of the period which could hardly be considered complete without the contribution of such a major protagonist.

### SURRENDER AT DACC

Birth of a Nation

Lt. Gen. J.F.R. Jacob (Retd.)

81-7304-189-X, 1997, 264p. maps Rs. 400

An architect of the '71 victory identifies the real victors... at last fills in some of the details of this historic event...

India Today

### FOREST OR FARM?

The Politics of Poverty and Land Hunger in Nepal

Krishna Ghimire

81-7304-213-6, 1998, 213p. Rs. 400 (HB)

This is a study of the politics of poverty, migration and landlessness in Nepal's Tarai region.

It discusses the hopes and frustrations of landless people of Tarai and examines the rationality of present land-use politics. It looks at the vested interests of socially dominant groups—interests which coincide with the official forest-protection measures, but which are totally contradictory to the subsistence needs of the landless.

The author pleads for promotion of small-holder land settlements in the Tarai which is most suitable for agriculture instead of pursuing a policy for conservation which lets productive land lie idle while the hungry people of the area multiply.

### INDIA'S WORLDS AND U.S. SCHOLARS

1947 to 1997

Joseph W. Elder, Edward C. Dimock Jr. and

Ainshie T. Embree (eds)

81-7304-235-7, 1998, 608p. Rs. 750 (HB)

81-7304-257-8, 1998, 608p. Rs. 400 (PB)

The volume aims to felicitate the people and government of India on the fiftieth anniversary of India's Independence, to acknowledge the ways in which the study of India has stimulated US scholars during the period and to express gratitude on behalf of AIIS to people and the government of India for their help in the scholars' endeavours.

Papers in the volume highlight the role of AIIS during the last fifty years and bring out the contribution of the study of India to various academic disciplines like, Anthropology, Art, History, Economics, Folklore, Geography, History, Language, Literature, Linguistics, Mathematics, Science, Philosophy, Political Science, Religious Studies, Sanskrit, Sociology, Gender Studies and Performing Arts.

— for our catalogue please write to us

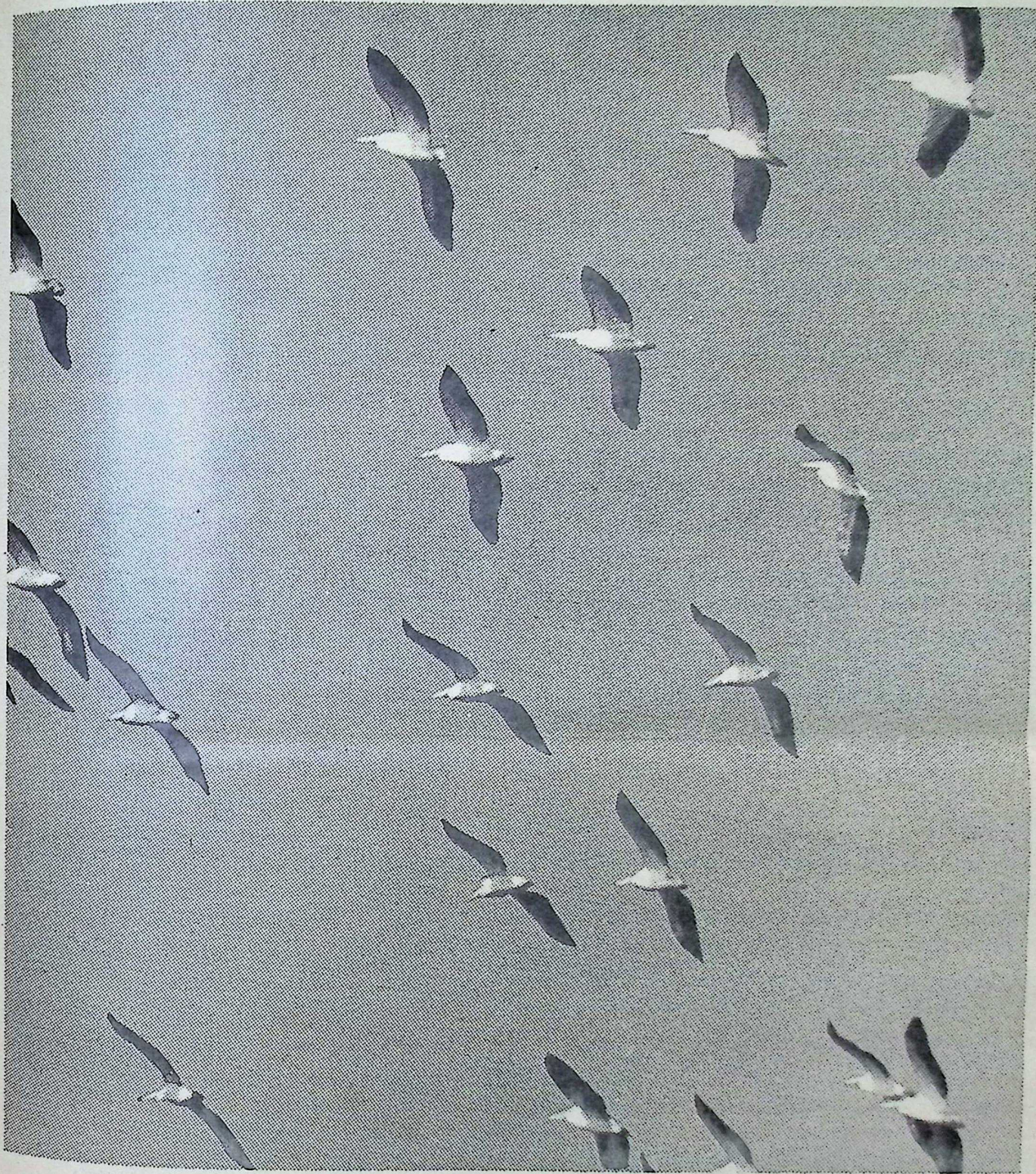
Manohar Publishers & Distributors

2/6, Ansari Road, New Delhi - 110002

Ph. : 327 5162, 328 4848 • Fax : 326 5162

email: MANBOOKS@GIASDL01.VSNL.NET.IN





## The only larger fleet flying Indian skies.

Unfortunately, they won't take you to where you'd like to touch down. But Indian Airlines can, thanks to its jet fleet comprising 10 Airbus A300's, 30 Airbus A320's and 12 B-737's linking 55 destinations in India and 17 overseas. And with 37,000 seats on 220 flights every day. All brought to you by a truly impressive infrastructure manned by our experienced and professional workforce of 22,000.

Come home to  **इंडियन एयरलाइन्स**  
Indian Airlines



## New from Oxford

### The Indian Ocean

A History of People and the Sea  
Kenneth McPherson

This book argues for the existence of a distinctive Indian Ocean world constituted by trade links and commercial networks established over several countries. The author shows that for millennia the Indian Ocean had a profound influence on the lives of the people who lived on its shores.

0 19 564243 0    1997    215 X 140 mm    341 pp.    Rs 250

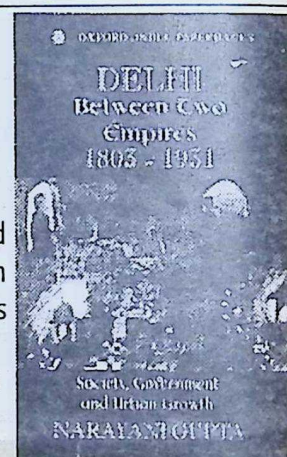


### Delhi Between two Empires 1803-1931

Society, Government and Urban Growth  
Narayani Gupta

This book is a sociopolitical history of the city of Delhi from 1803, when it was conquered by the British, to 1931, when New Delhi was formally inaugurated. Unlike most books on Delhi, which dwell on its medieval inheritance and monuments, this scholarly study provides a lively portrait of the city during a crucial phase of its more recent history.

0 19 564102 7    1997    215x140 mm    328 pp.    Rs 275

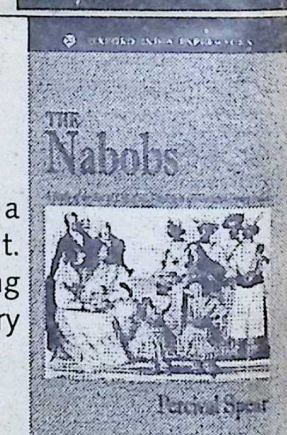


### The Nabobs

A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India  
Percival Spear

Percival Spear seeks to treat the social life of the English in eighteenth-century India as a connected whole, attempting to trace and account for the various phases of its development. The book presents a vivid picture, full of colour and movement, of life and manners during these different phases. The eight illustrations included in this book are taken from contemporary sources.

0 19 564381 X    1997    215 x 140 mm    240 pp.    Rs 195



### The Concept of Race in South Asia

Peter Robb

This volume constitutes one of the first attempts to raise the question race comparatively and over a long time-span with regard to South Asia. The issues studied include South Asian equivalents of the concept of race, the nature of Western concepts as applied to India during colonial rule, and the origin and type of more recent variants. The essays in this volume engage with a vast and growing body of writings on such issues, embracing studies of the person, identity, civil society, ethnicity and nationalism.

0 19 564268 6    1997    215 x 140 mm    268 pp.    Rs 195



## Oxford University Press

♦ Lucknow ♦ Bangalore ♦ Pune  
♦ Patna ♦ Hyderabad ♦ Guwahati

Calcutta: 5 Lala Lajpat Rai Sarani, Calcutta 700020  
Chennai: Oxford House, 219 Anna Salai, Chennai 600006  
Delhi: 2/11 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002  
Mumbai: Oxford House, Apollo Bunder, Mumbai 400001